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THE WORKS

Of the Most Reverend

Dr JOHN TILLOTSON,

LATE

Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. X.

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SER-

SERMON CCXXXVII.

The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The fourth sermon on this text.

I have been considering the evidence which those who lived in our Saviour's time had of his divine authority, from the power of working miracles, with which he was endued.

The miracles which concern our Saviour, I reduced to three heads; those of his life; those wrought at his death; and the great miracle of his resurrection from the dead, together with those two that were consequent upon it; his visible ascension into heaven, and his sending the Holy Ghost.

As to the resurrection of our Saviour, I have produced the testimonies for it, and have added some considerations that may give strength and advantage to that testimony; and shall now proceed to take notice of the most considerable exceptions that may be made against it. And all the exceptions that can be brought against it, that are of any moment, and that I know of, are these three; that tradition of the Jews, that he was stolen out of the grave: or that he was not really dead; or that his appearance was an illusion from evil spirits. The first of these is ancient, and was the invention of

Jews, and denies the integrity of the witneſſes of his reſurrection, making them deceivers: The two laſt ſuppoſe the fidelity of the witneſſes, but ſay, they were deceived, either as to his death, or as to his appearance afterward: and theſe have been ſince invented by atheiſtical ſpirits. I ſhall briefly anſwer them, and firſt in general, I ſay theſe two things:

1. That they who deny this, have this diſadvantage, that they are to prove a negative, which is never capable of that evidence, which an affirmation is.

2. Theſe exceptions look very like envy, for they do not concur to make up one ſtrong objection againſt the teſtimony of Chriſt's reſurrection; but each of them contradicts the other, and is inconſiſtent with them: For if the tradition of the Jews be true, that he was ſtolen out of the grave after that he was dead and buried, and that the ſtory of his appearing to them was a forgery, then the two latter exceptions are falſe, and ſo of the reſt; ſo that theſe exceptions look very like the falſe witneſſes that were ſuborned againſt Chriſt, that they do not agree together. But to the objections themſelves, I anſwer,

Firſt, The tradition of the Jews; that his body was ſtolen out of the ſepulchre, and all that which is related afterwards of his appearing to his diſciples, and converſing with them, and aſcending into heaven, was a forgery and impoſture.

Anſw. 1. We have early notice given of this in the hiſtory of the goſpel, Matth. xxviii. 11. that when the chief prieſts heard that his body was gone out of the grave, they conſulted together, and hired the ſoldiers to ſay that the diſciples came by night, and whilſt they were aſleep, ſtole him away. Obſerve what it was that the ſoldiers were to teſtify, that whilſt they were aſleep, the diſciples came and ſtole away his body. Very credible perſons, that were to give teſtimony of what they ſaw done, whilſt they were aſleep! A man had need be hired with a great ſum to give ſuch a teſtimony, ſo ridiculous: and it ſeems the Phariſees looked upon the governor as very ſimple, that would be ſo eaſily perſwaded of ſo unlikely a thing.

2. It

2. It should seem it was not believed by themselves; for Josephus, a knowing and learned man of that nation and religion, who lived immediately after that time, speaks positively in the 18th book of his Antiquities, that "Christ was crucified, and appeared to his disciples the third day, rising from the dead;" and he speaks not a word of the forgery, which had been much for the credit of his nation and religion.

3. If we compare the fidelity of the persons on both sides; the witnesses of Christ's resurrection cannot be suspected of any worldly interest or design; but the Priests and Pharisees were concerned, both in reputation and interest, to blast this miracle as much as they could; because if it should be entertained, both their religion would be endangered, and they would be looked upon as murderers of him whose holiness and innocency was attested by such a miracle.

4. If this exception had been true, it had been easy to have discovered the imposture, and undeceived the people; the gospel would have fallen and sunk in a short time. Nothing but truth could have born up and prevailed against so much opposition. If this had been the work of men, and an imposture, it would have come to nought; but it was truth, and of God, and therefore it could not be overthrown.

Secondly, That he was not dead when he was put into the grave, that he was but in a swoon or deliquium, and so might rise again without a miracle.

Answ. 1. We may reasonably suppose, that the malice of the Jews took care to kill him. Besides, the circumstances of the story do sufficiently evidence it. Upon the piercing of his side, water and blood came out; which was an evidence that his heart was pierced. And after his body was exhausted of its blood, there could be no return to life again. But it seems the soldiers were satisfied in the thing, who, when they came to break his bones, spared him, because they saw that he was already dead.

2. If he was not dead, yet how should he rise again? It was a pitiful securing of the grave, and a little great stone that was rolled upon it, if a weak and wounded, and spent man, after so much pain, and the expence of so much blood, could roll it away.

3. Suppose he did rise, what became of him afterwards? How came we to have no particulars of what became of him? If those which the story gives us be true, that after forty days he was taken up into heaven, we need not doubt of his resurrection, for this is as miraculous as that.

Thirdly, The third and last exception is as unreasonable as any, which grants that he did seem to appear to the disciples, but they were imposed upon by the illusion of evil spirits.

Answ. 1. That which may be an evasion in any case, is to be admitted in no case. This exception supposeth as much evidence for his resurrection, as this or any other thing is capable of; and yet would make it an illusion: but this denies all certainty; for if we may be deceived when we have the greatest assurance of a thing that our senses can give us; then we may not only question the resurrection of Christ, but every thing else.

2. If we believe the providence of God, we cannot think it to be so little vigilant, as that honest and well-meaning persons should be continually exposed to the insolence and cheats of evil spirits, and in a matter of the greatest concernment should be ever liable to be deceived, and cannot help it.

Having thus considered our Saviour's resurrection, and answered the objections against it, I proceed to those two miracles which followed his resurrection; namely, his ascension into heaven; and his sending the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and primitive Christians in such miraculous powers and gifts.

First, His ascension into heaven. And of this the disciples of our Saviour were also eye-witnesses. So St. Luke tells us, Acts i. 4, 9. *And when they were assembled together*, and Christ among them after his resurrection, and when he had given them in charge what

what he would have them to do, *as they looked on, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.* What more visible demonstration could there be, that this man was sent of God, than that after he had preached the doctrine which he came to deliver to the world, and confirmed it by so many miracles, and God has given so great an attestation to him, by raising him up from the dead; I say, what more visible demonstration that he came from God, than to see him taken up into heaven, after he had finished the work for which God sent him into the world?

Secondly, The sending of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and primitive Christians in such miraculous powers and gifts, whereby they were enabled to speak divers languages, in order to the more expedite publishing of the gospel to the world, to heal diseases, and to raise the dead, to foretel things to come, and (which was common with the Apostles and all Christians for some ages) they had a power of casting out devils, by adjuring them in the name of Christ. Now what could be a clearer evidence that he came from God, and was returned to him, than the conferring of such miraculous powers and gifts upon men, after he was ascended into heaven, as a testimony that he was invested in his royalty, having a power conferred upon him to dispense those gifts to men?

But of the ascension * of our Saviour, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, † having upon other occasions discoursed at large, I shall need to add no more here; only, before I conclude this head, I shall briefly mention the chief of those objections, which these miracles which were wrought by our Saviour, and on his behalf, are liable to, and endeavour to return a satisfactory answer to them. And there are two objections against his miracles in general. *First*, That he wrought them by the power of the Devil.

Secondly, The other objection is taken from that

* *Sermon* 196. † *Ser.* 197, 198, 199. *And Ser.* 229, 230, 231.

expreſſion of the evangeliſt, Matth. xiii. 58. where it is ſaid, that when Jeſus was in his own country, *he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief;* which ſaying is perverſly abuſed by ſome, as if it ſignified, that the credulity, and ſtrong imagination of the people, was a great ingredient into his miracles.

Firſt, That he wrought them by the power of the Devil. This was the objection which the Jews of old made againſt our Saviour: Matth. xii. 24. *That he caſt out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*, who had power and authority over the reſt, and conſequently to caſt out thoſe that were ſubject to him; and the Jews at this day make the ſame objection againſt all his miracles. Celſus did the ſame.

To this I cannot render a better anſwer than our Saviour himſelf did, when this objection was firſt ſtarted, which was twofold:

1. That it was very unlikely that the Devil ſhould contribute to the ruin and overthrow of his own kingdom. Matth. xii. 25, 26. *Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf, is brought to deſolation: and every city or houſe divided againſt itſelf, ſhall not ſtand. And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf: how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand?* The force of which argument is this, that it cannot be imagined, that he who preacheth a doctrine ſo contrary to the deſign which the Devil carried on in the world, and ſo deſtructive to his kingdom, as our Saviour did, ſhould be aſſiſted by him to confirm the doctrine by any miraculous effects; eſpecially ſuch as did ſo directly tend to the overthrow of his own kingdom, and to diſpoſſeſs him of the advantage of tyrannizing over men, which he was ſo deſirous to get and hold.

But, 2. He tells them, that by the ſame reaſon that they attributed thoſe miracles of his to the Devil, all miracles that ever were wrought in the world, might be attributed to him. Did it appear by the tendency of his doctrine, or the courſe and deſign of his life and actions, or by any magical rites that he

he used, that he had any familiarity with the Devil; or carried on any design for him? What colour of reason then was there to ascribe the miracles that he wrought to the Devil, any more than the miracles that Moses had wrought; or any more than those dispossessions which were wrought by the children of their own nation, in the name of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob? ver. 27. *If I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.* Several among yourselves do, or at least pretend to cast out Devils, by the power of God, and you believe they do so; why should you not think that I do it by the same power? what reason have you to suspect me of correspondence with the Devil more than them? No answer could have been more satisfactory in itself, and more apposite to those that made the objection.

The *second* objection is grounded upon a spiteful and malicious perverting of those words of the Evangelist, Matth. xiii. 58. where it is said, that Jesus, when he was in his own country, *did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* From whence some atheistical persons, as Cæsar Vaninus, and a wretched man of our own nation, who, I suppose stole it out of him, have collected, that credulity and strong imagination in the people, were the principal ingredients into our Saviour's miracles; and where he did not meet with persons so disposed, he could do no great matter.

This objection deserves rather to be abhorred and detested, as a groundless and malicious insinuation, than to be answered; but because it seems to have some colour as well as spite in it, I shall briefly return an answer to it, and that by giving a plain account of this passage in the Evangelist; and that is this: Our Saviour comes to Nazareth, the place where he had been born, and he began to instruct them in his doctrine, and, as he used to do wherever he came, he wrought some miracles for the confirmation of his doctrine; but they upon an unreasonable prejudice taken up against him, because they had known

known the meanneſs of his parents, and of his education, deſpiſed both his doctrine and his miracles. Our Saviour perceiving that upon this prejudice they rejected the evidence of his miracles, the higheſt atteſtation that God can give, ſaw that there was no good to be done upon them; and therefore leaving them to their own obſtinacy and unreaſonable unbelief, he forbore to do any more great works among them; for the text doth not ſay that he did *no* mighty works among them, becauſe of their unbelief; but that he did *not many* mighty works among them; that is, finding them poſſeſſed with this unreaſonable prejudice againſt him, he found they were not to be convinced by any miracle that he could work; and therefore, though he had done *ſome mighty works* among them, yet he forbore to *do any more*, as a juſt judgment upon them for their obſtinacy and unbelief. And that this is the plain meaning of it, there needs no more to convince any man, but to read over this paſſage of the Evangeliſt, Matth. xiii. 54, 55, 56, 57, 58. *And when he was come into his country, he taught them in their ſynagogue, inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, Whence hath this man this wiſdom, and theſe mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's ſon? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? And his ſiſters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all theſe things? and they were offended in him. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A Prophet is not without honour, ſave in his own country, and in his own houſe. And he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.* And now judge how little reaſon there is from theſe words, for any ſuch fooliſh and malicious objection.

I might add further, if it were neceſſary, that many of his miracles were ſuch, as no credulity or ſtrength of imagination could aſſiſt in the working of them; as I could make evident from very many inſtances, particularly that of raiſing Lazarus, after he had lain four days in the grave. But enough of this.

Now

Now to reflect upon this evidence of Christ's divine authority from the miracles which he did, and which were wrought to give testimony to him. What greater satisfaction can any one be imagined to have concerning any person, that he is sent from God, than the Apostles had, and the rest of those who conversed with our Saviour, and saw the miracles that were wrought by him, and on his behalf: Suppose we had lived in our Saviour's time, and had conversed with him, what greater evidence could we have desired of his divine authority, than to have seen with our eyes so many strange things done by him, exceeding any natural power that we know of, and things so beneficial to mankind: and all these wrought so frequently, and so openly? To have seen this person put to death, and at that instant the whole frame of nature disordered and put out of its course? To have seen this person, after he had lain three days in the grave, raised to life again; and to have the greatest assurance of this that our senses can give us of any thing; by frequent and familiar conversation; by discoursing with him; by eating and drinking with him; by touching and handling of his body; and afterwards to have seen this same person visibly taken up into heaven; and, according as he had promised before he left the world, to have found ourselves afterwards endowed with a miraculous power of speaking all on a sudden all sorts of languages; of healing diseases; of foretelling things to come; of casting out devils; of raising the dead; had we seen all this with our eyes, and experienced this strange power in ourselves, could there have remained any doubt in us, but that this person was sent from God, and specially commissioned from heaven, to declare the mind of God to the world?

If after all this, any man will say, that so many persons as were eye-witnesses of these things, might be deceived in a plain sensible matter; I would desire that man to prove to me that he is waking, or to evidence to me by better arguments any thing else that he thinks himself most certain of.

IV. The

IV. The *fourth* evidence which those who lived in our Saviour's time had of his divine authority, was the spirit of prophecy proved to be in him, and made good by the accomplishment of his own predictions. This also was a clear testimony that he was from God; for God challengeth this as peculiar to the Deity, to foretel future contingents, Isa. xli. 23. *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.* The oracles of the Heathen did give out some dark and doubtful conjectures about future things; but a clear and certain prediction of things was always looked upon as an argument that the person that could do it, was inspired from God; and therefore the spirit of prophecy which was in our Saviour, and by him conferred upon the Apostles afterward, hath always been justly looked upon as a good testimony that he was from God. So the Angel tells St. John. Rev. xix 10. that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

Now the predictions of our Saviour were many; and those very plain, punctual and particular; and such as all or most of them had their accomplishment in that age. That we may take a more distinct view of them, I shall reduce them to these five heads:

1. Those that foretold his death, and the circumstances of it.

2. His resurrection, and the particular circumstances of that.

3. The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, with the circumstances belonging to that.

4. The destruction of Jerusalem before the end of that age, with the signs foregoing it, and the concomitant circumstances of that.

5. Those that foretold the fate of the gospel in the world, the opposition it should meet with, and yet the admirable success it should have, notwithstanding that opposition.

1. Those that foretel his death, and the circumstances of it. This he did very particularly, and at several times, Matth. xvi. 21. he told his disciples, *That he must go unto Jerusalem, and there suffer many things*

things of the Elders, and chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed, Mark x. 33, 34. And Matth. xx. 18, 19. he foretells more particularly the manner of their proceedings against him, that *the chief Priests and Scribes should condemn him to death:* but that they should not put him to death, but *deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and scourge, and crucify him*, which was afterwards done by Pilate the Roman Governor. He foretold likewise the manner how this should be brought about, Matth. xx. 18. that he should be *betrayed into the hands of men.* And he did particularly point out before-hand the man than was to betray him, Matth. xxvi. 23. *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.* He foretold that his disciples should forsake him, Matth. xxvi. 31. *All of you shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* And when Peter declared his confident resolution to stick to him, he foretold that he should deny him, with very particular circumstances of the time and manner of it, Mark xiv. 30. *This night before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice:* Which was all punctually accomplished.

2. He punctually foretold his resurrection, with the circumstances of it, that he should rise again the third day, Matth. xvi. 21. and that *after he was risen, he would go before them into Galilee*, Matth. xxvi. 32. which was accomplished, Matth. xxviii. 16.

3. He foretold likewise the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles in miraculous powers and gifts, Luke xxiv. 49. *Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* He specifies the place where the Holy Ghost should descend; and what the effects of this descent of the Holy Ghost upon them should be; he tells them particularly, Mark xvi. 17, 18. *And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, and they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands*

hands on the sick, and they shall recover. All which was punctually fulfilled in the second of the Acts, and the following part of that history.

There are yet two other instances of our Saviour's prophetical spirit, which I mentioned; but those I reserve to the next discourse.

SERMON CCXXXVIII.

The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The fifth sermon on this text.

I Am considering the fourth evidence which those who lived in our Saviour's time had of his divine authority, *viz.* the spirit of prophecy proved to be in him, and made good by the accomplishment of his predictions. I gave five instances of our Saviour's predictions.

1. Those which foretold his death and its circumstances.

2. Those which foretold his resurrection, and its circumstances.

3. Those which foretold the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, with the circumstances thereof.

These three I have considered, and uow proceed to the two which remain.

4. The

4. The next instance therefore of our Saviour's prophetical spirit, is his foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, with the circumstances of it. Now because this is one of the greatest instances of our Saviour's prophetical spirit, and so particular a prediction, so punctually answered by the event, therefore I shall insist the longer upon it: Especially because I look upon it as one of the most convincing arguments that can be brought against the Jews for the truth of our religion.

And in order to our clearer proceeding in this matter that I am speaking to, I shall do these three things:

First, Explain the series and order of this prediction of our Saviour's concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

Secondly, Expound the particulars of it, as we find them in Matthew xxiv. compared with the other two Evangelists that wrote of it, St. Mark and St. Luke.

Thirdly, Make some reflexions upon this prediction, and the punctual accomplishment of it; from which it may appear of what force this argument is for the conviction of the Jews of the truth of our religion.

First, I shall explain the series and order of this prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. And this is necessary, because it seems to most interpreters to be so intermingled with a prophecy of Christ's last coming at the end of the world, that it is no easy matter to separate those two prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world. Besides that it is incumbered with some other difficulties, arising from some particular expressions in this famous prediction of our Saviour's.

From the 34th verse of the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, to the 29th of the 24th chapter, there is a clear prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, with the preceeding signs, and concomitant and subsequent circumstances of it: But at the 29th verse, the prophecy of the end of the world seems to be designedly joined to it: for the evangelist says, *immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall*

be darkened, &c. Where he enumerates dismal signs, and forerunners of the dissolution of all things: But it is now 1600 years since the destruction of Jerusalem, and yet the world is not at an end. How is it then that the Evangelist says, *Immediately after the tribulation of those days?* This is the first difficulty.

Secondly, After this prophecy of the end of the world, we find those words in all the three Evangelists, *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled.* As if not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but the end of the world were to happen in that age. This is the other difficulty.

But notwithstanding all this, I doubt not but by comparing the three Evangelists together, to make the series and order of these prophecies very clear.

In order whereunto, we are to consider that our Saviour in this prophecy foretells three things very distinct in time:

1. The destruction of Jerusalem.

2. The fate and condemnation of the Jewish nation after this desolation, and during their captivity among the Gentiles, among whom they were to be scattered. And this we have clearly and fully expressed by St. Luke, xxi. 23, 24, *There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people; and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be troden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* So that this prediction comprehends from the destruction of Jerusalem all the time of the captivity of the Jews among the Gentiles, which we see is not yet expired, and God alone knows how long it shall last. And then,

3. Forerunning signs of the end of the world, which the Evangelists say shall happen *after the tribulation of those days;* that is, when God hath made an end of punishing the nation of the Jews. And this seems to me wholly to clear and take off the first difficulty.

As

As to the *second*, namely, That after the prophecy of the end of the world, we find these words added by our Saviour, *Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled*, which seems to intimate, that the end of the world should happen in that age. For the answering of this, I shall not betake myself to that refuge which some have done, by explaining these words thus, *this generation*, that is, *this nation shall not pass away*, shall not be utterly destroyed, but shall remain scattered up and down the world, as a monument of God's displeasure against them, till the end of all things. For though the expression γενεὰ αὕτη, *this generation*, may well enough be translated *this nation, this race of people;* yet the precedent words will not admit this interpretation; for it is said in the verse immediately before, *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.* So that our Saviour speaks of something very near at hand, which necessarily confines it to *that generation.*

Therefore the plain solution of this difficulty is this, that our Saviour ends his prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, at the 31st. verse, where he says, *that the Son of man shall send his Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* And then he makes some reflexions upon what he had foretold concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world.

(1.) As to the destruction of Jerusalem he tells them a parable of the fig-tree, that by the *putting forth of its leaves*, we know that *the summer is nigh; so likewise when ye shall see all these things*, namely, all those signs which I have given you of the destruction of Jerusalem, *know that it is near, even at the doors*, and then he adds, *Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away untill all these things be fulfilled;* that is, many of those who are now alive, shall live to see all those signs which I have mentioned. And then,

(2.) He reflects upon his prediction of the end of the world, ver. 36. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, &c.* that is, not of that other day, of which I have been speaking, namely, *of the end of the world, no man knows;* as if he had said, The signs which I have given of the destruction of Jerusalem are as plain, as the budding of the fig-tree is a sign of summer: But I have not given such plain signs of the end of the world, and the day of judgment. That I have declared to you in dark allegories of the sun's being darkened, and the moon's not giving her light, and the stars falling from heaven, which cannot be understood literally: and the mystical meaning of them is very hidden.

And thus I hope I have removed those difficulties, and made the order and series of this prophecy very clear.

Secondly, I come in the next place to expound the particulars of this prophecy, so far as it concerns the destruction of Jerusalem, as we find them in the 24th of St. Matthew, compared with the other two Evangelists that wrote of it, St. Mark and St. Luke; and to shew the exact accomplishment of each of these particulars, not only from the tradition of Christians, but from the writings of the Jews and Heathens, which are so much the stronger on our side, because they are the testimonies of enemies: And in the expounding of this prophecy, I shall distinctly consider these three things:

1. Our Saviour's general prediction of the siege and total destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, which you have from the 34th verse of the 23d chapter, to the 3d verse of the 24th.

2. His prediction of the signs that should forerun the destruction of Jerusalem, from verse the 3d, to verse the 21st.

3. The concomitant and subsequent circumstances of it, from verse 21st to verse 29th.

1. Our Saviour's general prediction of the siege of Jerusalem, and of the total destruction of the city. This our Saviour foretells, Luke xix. 41, 42, 43, 44. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and*

and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. So Josephus tells, lib. 6. that Titus raised a wall round about Jerusalem, and kept them in on every side: so that none could come out, though many thousands were famished with hunger; which was so sad and dismal a calamity, that our Saviour, though he knew how just a cause there was for it, yet out of very humanity, and tenderness of nature, he could not but upon the foresight of so sad a destruction, *weep over it.* He indeed expresseth his vehement desire that this might have been prevented, Matth. xxiii. 37, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* Therefore having brought this ruin wilfully upon themselves, he pronounceth the sentence of their destruction, verse 38. *Behold your house is left unto you desolate!* And at the beginning of the next chapter, when the disciples were shewing him the beautiful structure of the temple, he foretells, that *there should not one stone be left upon another, which should not be thrown down.*

Now that all this was punctually accomplished, Josephus tells us, *lib. 7. bell. Jud.* that when the Romans had taken the city, Cæsar gave order to lay it waste to the ground, excepting some part of the wall which was left for the guards of soldiers, and three of the strongest towers, which he ordered to be left for a standing monument of the Roman courage: but all the rest of the city was so levelled,

that no man that ſhould come to ſee it, could believe that it was ever inhabited,

And our Saviour's prediction of the utter ruin of the temple, was moſt remarkably fulfilled. For the Roman hiſtory tells us, That Turnus Rufus with a plough ſhare did tear up the foundation of the temple, and left no part of it, not ſo much as under ground, undiſſolved. So that our Saviour's prophecy was literally fulfilled, *There was not left one ſtone upon another, that was not thrown down.*

2. I ſhall next conſider our Saviour's prediction of the ſigns which ſhould forerun the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, namely theſe eight:

Firſt, That there ſhould riſe up falſe and counterfeit Chriſts or Meſſias's.

Secondly, Great judgments ſhould befal the world, and particularly that nation, not long before that time; there ſhould be *wars, and rumours of wars, famines, peſtilences, earthquakes in divers places.*

Thirdly, Fearful ſights and ſigns from heaven.

Fourthly, Perſecution of the Chriſtians.

Fifthly, That upon this occaſion there ſhould be a great apoſtacy of Chriſtians.

Sixthly, That upon this perſecution many falſe prophets and teachers ſhould ariſe.

Seventhly, That there ſhould be an univerſal publication of the goſpel before this great deſolation ſhould happen.

Eightly, and laſtly, which was to be the moſt immediate ſign and forerunner of their ruin, *The abomination of deſolation*, ſhould be *ſeen ſtanding in the holy place.* And theſe you have ſet down from the 3d verſe of this 24th chapter, to the 21ſt, which I ſhall briefly expound, and ſhew how the event did correſpond to the prediction.

Our Saviour having before foretold the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the temple in general, the diſciples come to him, and aſk him two queſtions, *When ſhould theſe things be? And what ſhould be the ſign of his coming?* that is in judgment to deſtroy Jeruſalem: and what *ſhould be the ſigns of the end of the world?* I ſhall only conſider the firſt, the ſigns that ſhould forerun the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, as being only pertinent to my preſent purpoſe.

Firſt,

First, He foretells there should be false and counterfeit Christs, or Messias's, ver. 3, 4. *Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* This our Saviour gives as one of the first signs, and therefore St. Luke adds, chap. xxi. 8. *The time draweth near*, that is, it should not be long before this sign should appear; and it accordingly happened. Josephus mentions several of these; of whom, though Josephus do not expressly say that they called themselves the Messias, yet he says that which is equivalent, that they undertook to rescue the people from the Roman yoke, which was the thing which the Jews expected the Messias should do for them: And therefore we find Luke xxiv. 21. that the disciples that were going up to Emmaus, and knew not that Christ was risen, and were doubtful what to think of him, because it was the third day, they say, *We hoped this had been he that should have redeemed Israel*; that is, they hoped this had been the Messias, that being it seems a common periphrasis of the Messias, that he was *he that was to deliver Israel*. Such an one Theudas pretended himself to be; not that Theudas of whom Gamaliel speaks, Acts xv. 36. but another of the same name, who about twelve years after our Saviour's death, when Cuspius Fadus was Procurator of Judea, rose and seduced the people; of whom Josephus, *lib.* 18. gives this account, that "being a sorcerer, he rose up and "deceived many;" which is the very expression our Saviour useth, *They shall deceive many*. This man persuaded a great multitude to bring their goods and follow him down the river Jordan, which he promised by his command to divide, and to give them a safe passage over it. But whilst he was thus playing the fool among the people, Fadus sent some forces, and surprised him and his company, killing many of them, and cutting off his head; and so there was an end of him.

Such likewise were those impostors, which about two and twenty years after our Saviour's death, were so rife among them, when Felix was governor of Judea; of whom

whom Josephus tells us, that they drew multitudes after them into the wilderness, promising to work great signs and wonders before them; which agrees exactly with the description which our Saviour gives of *the false Christs and false prophets*, ver. 24. where he says, that they should *shew great signs and wonders*, σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, the very words which Josephus useth. And verse 26. *If they shall say to you, he is in the desart, go not forth;* answerable to what Josephus says, "That they drew "many after them into the wilderness."

Such an one likewise was the Egyptian Prophet, who, as Josephus tells, came to Jerusalem much about the same time, and persuaded the people to follow him to mount Olivet, persuading them, that from thence they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall, and so might enter the city. Which Felix understanding, sent soldiers, and slew and took several of them, but the Egyptian impostor himself made an escape; which is the reason of that saying of the chief Captain to Paul, Acts xxi. 38. *Art not thou the Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar?* &c.

Such another was that impostor, (if he be distinct from the former) who, as Josephus tells us, about three years after, under Festus Porcius the Procurator, deceived the people with vain promises of deliverance, and ease from their oppressions, if they would follow him into the wilderness; but Festus sent soldiers, and destroyed him and his company.

And shall deceive many, that is, by raising false expectations in the people, shall draw them into ruin, as Josephus tells us they did many of the Jews. And this our Saviour elsewhere foretold as a just judgment of God upon them for rejecting of him who was the true Messias, John v. 43. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*

Secondly, The next sign our Saviour gives, is, *Wars, and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes*, &c. ver. 6, 7. *And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars.* About this time the Jews began to be set upon

upon in ſeveral places, by the command of the Emperor; and many thouſands of them were ſlain at Alexandria and Babylon, as Joſephus tells us. And there was a fear, and rumour of a general war denounced againſt them by Caius Caligula the Emperor, unleſs they would receive his ſtatue into the temple. Upon this rumour the whole nation was in great aſtoniſhment, inſomuch that the Jews left their buſineſs, and neglected to till their grounds, expecting the Romans would have fallen upon them, of which conſternation, both Joſephus and Philo give us a particular account.

Our Saviour adds, *See that ye be not troubled; for theſe things muſt come to paſs, but the end is not yet;* that is, when you ſee the nation in this danger from the Romans, be not ye troubled, as the Jews will be, thinking now will be the ruin of the nation. This and many other things will happen, before the final end come. And accordingly it fell out. For ſo Joſephus and Tacitus tell us, that this ſtorm was blown over by the ſudden death of the Emperor.

Verſe 7. *Nation ſhall riſe up againſt nation.* Which happened under Claudius and Nero, the two next Roman Emperors, when in ſeveral cities, as Cæſarea, Ptolemais, and many others, the Jews and thoſe of other nations that inhabited thoſe cities, fell upon and deſtroyed one another, as may be read at large in Joſephus.

And kingdom againſt kingdom. This ſeems to refer to the ſeveral provinces or tetrarchies in Paleſtine, which were alſo called kingdoms, which at this time had cruel wars againſt one another; as the Jews and Galileans againſt the Samaritans, and ſeveral others that Joſephus ſpeaks of.

And there ſhall be famines and peſtilences. Accordingly Joſephus tells us, that under Claudius Cæſar there was a great famine in Judea, namely, that which was propheſied of by Agabus, Acts xi. 28. And this Grotius very probably ſuppoſeth to be the reaſon why St. Paul in his epiſtles, written about that time, is ſo earneſt with the Chriſtians to ſend relief to the ſaints at Jeruſalem. Peſtilences, they uſually follow famine; *and earthquakes in divers places;* which happened in the

times

times of Claudius and Nero. Philoſtratus ſpeaks of a great earthquake that happened in Crete in the time of Claudius, and in ſeveral other places, as Smyrna, Chios, Samos, &c. not long before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; Tacitus ſpeaks of one in Aſia about the ſame time. And though theſe were at a greater diſtance, than the other ſigns which our Saviour mentions; yet the Jews could not but hear of them, becauſe ſeveral of the nations were diſperſed into ſome of thoſe places.

Thirdly, *Fearful ſights and ſigns from heaven.* So St. Luke, chap. xxi. ver. 11. *There ſhall be fearful ſights, and great ſigns from heaven.* Joſephus gives us a clear comment upon this, *Bell. Jud. lib.* 7. ſays he, "This wretched people believed impoſtors and counterfeits, but thoſe great ſigns and prodigies which did forerun their deſolation, they neither minded, nor believed." A little before their deſtruction (he tells us) there hung over their city a fiery ſword, which continued for a year together. A little before their rebellion againſt the Romans, there appeared a comet, which ſhined ſo clear in the temple, and about the altar, as if it had been day. And the ſame day an heifer, that was led to be ſacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the middle of the temple. The eaſtern gate of the temple, which was of maſſy braſs, and very heavy, and could ſcarce be ſhut by the ſtrength of twenty men, and was conſtantly made faſt with ſtrong locks and bars, flew open at midnight; which when it was told to the Magiſtrate, and he came to ſee it, they could ſcarce get ſtrength enough to ſhut it. One evening, not long before their deſolation, there were ſeen in the air, chariots and armies hovering over the city. At the feaſt of Pentecoſt, the Prieſts going one night into the temple, according to their cuſtom, firſt heard a noiſe, and afterwards a ſudden voice, ſaying, *Let us go hence.* And, which was very terrible, one Jeſus a plain countryman, four years before any troubles began, when the city was in a deep peace, came up to Jeruſalem, and upon one of their feſtivals, began to cry out with a loud voice, *A voice from the eaſt, a voice from the weſt, a voice from the four winds, a voice againſt Jeruſalem and the temple, a voice*

a voice againſt bridegrooms and brides, a voice againſt the people. And thus he went about crying day and night; and being ſeized on by the Magiſtrate, and puniſhed and tortured, he would not give over, but ſtill went crying about, *Wo, wo to Jeruſalem;* and thus he continued for ſeven years and five months together, and was neither weary nor hoarſe, until the city was beſieged, and then he was quiet; but one time went up upon the walls, and cried with a loud voice, *Wo, wo to the city and the temple, and the people,* and added, *Wo alſo to myſelf;* and immediately was ſtruck dead by a ſtone out of a croſs-bow.

Were not theſe *fearful ſights and great ſigns from heaven?* And theſe we have all related by one of the moſt prudent hiſtorians, who lived at that very time, and that very place; and he ſays, that many were alive when he wrote, and could atteſt all this.

Verſe 8. *All theſe are the beginning of ſorrows.* The ſcripture uſually compares the greateſt ſufferings and afflictions to *the pains of a woman in travail,* to which our Saviour here alludes, and ſays, *Theſe were but the firſt pangs, nothing to thoſe throws which ſhould come at laſt.*

Theſe are three of the ſigns forerunning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which were predicted by our Saviour. There are yet five more, which I reſerve for my next diſcourſe on this ſubject.

SER-

SERMON CCXXXIX.

The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The sixth sermon on this text.

THE fourth evidence which those who lived in our Saviour's time had of his divine authority, was, the spirit of prophecy proved to be in him, and made good by the accomplishment of his predictions.

I have given five instances of our Saviour's predictions, and am now treating on the fourth of them, *viz.* His foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, with the circumstances of it.

In explaining the particulars of this prophecy, I proposed three things to be considered:

1. Our Saviour's general prediction of the siege, and total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

2. His prediction of the signs that should forerun it.

3. His prediction of the concomitant and subsequent circumstances of it.

I am upon the second of these, *viz.* our Saviour's prediction of the signs that should forerun the destruction

ſtruction of Jeruſalem; three of which I have diſpatched, and now proceed to thoſe which remain.

Fourthly, Another ſign which our Saviour foretold, as a forerunner of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, was perſecution of the Chriſtians. *They ſhall deliver you to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you.* St. Mark expreſſeth it more particularly, Mark xiii. 9. *But take heed to yourſelves: for they ſhall deliver you up to councils, and in the ſynagogues ye ſhall be beaten, and ye ſhall be brought before rulers and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them.* And theſe did partly happen before the forementioned calamities, and partly upon them; but our Saviour firſt reckons by themſelves the common calamities of the nation; and then he comes to thoſe which did concern his diſciples and followers; and this follows very fitly upon the former more general calamities. For we find the fathers in their apologies every where complaining, that the Jews and Heathen laid the blame of all the judgments and calamities which befel them, as famine, peſtilence, and earthquakes, upon the Chriſtians, as the cauſes of them; and from this pretence they many times took occaſion to perſecute them.

They ſhall deliver you to be afflicted. This was fulfilled in delivering ſome of the Apoſtles to be whipped and impriſoned by the chief prieſts and rulers, as Peter and John; or giving them up to the Roman power, as they did James and Peter to Herod; Paul to Gallio, Felix and Feſtus, and laſt of all to Nero.

And ſhall kill you. St. Luke ſaith, *ſome of you*; for of others he ſaith, *that not a hair of their head ſhould fall to the ground.* Thus Stephen was killed by a popular tumult; and the two James's were put to death under colour of a judicial proceſs; the one ſtoned by the council of the Jews, and the other put to death by Herod.

And ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name's ſake. Which began under Nero, who, charging the Chriſtians with the burning of the city, as Tacitus tells us, when himſelf had ſet it on fire, tortured many of them, as guilty of the fact. *For my name's ſake.*

This was exactly fulfilled, in that the Christians were so miserably persecuted for no other cause, but for being called Christians. They did not punish them for opposing their idolatry, for that the Jews did as well as the Christians, who yet escaped their malice; nor could they lay any other crime to their charge. Hence was that common saying among the Heathen, *Vir bonus Caius Sejus; tatummodò quòd Christianus.*

Fifthly, And upon this persecution, the apostacy of many from Christianity, ver. 10. *Then shall many be offended;* that is, fall off from Christianity because of these persecutions, as we read several did, Demas, Hermogenes, Phygellus, and probably several others.

And they shall betray one another, and hate one another. Which was remarkably fulfilled in the sect of the Gnosticks, who did not only decline persecution themselves, but joined with those that persecuted the Christians, as ecclesiastical history tells us.

Sixthly, That likewise upon this occasion of persecution, *many false Prophets should arise, and deceive many*, ver. 11. which seems to refer to Simon Magus, who gave himself out to be *the power of God*, and to the other heads of the Gnostic sect, ver. 12. *And the love of many shall grow cold, because iniquity shall abound.* Which seems to refer likewise to the Gnostics, of whom St. John in his first epistle doth so frequently make mention of their name; as *he that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments*, &c. and of whom he doth so much complain for want of love to their brethren.

Ver. 13: *But he that shall endure to the end, shall be saved;* that is, he that shall continue constant in the profession of the faith, notwithstanding these persecutions and apostasies, and false teachers that shall arise, *shall be saved.*

Seventhly, That there should be an universal publication of the gospel, before this great desolation should happen, ver. 14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations,*

tions. And this was accomplished before the destruction of Jerusalem: for the gospel was published all over the Roman empire before that time: and that is it which is here meant by *the world*, in the same sense that Augustus is said by St. Luke, *to have taxed all the world*. And this is the very phrase which the Romans constantly used, calling the Roman empire, *Imperium orbis terrarum*. And that the gospel was thus published, we may easily believe, if we consider how many were sent forth for this purpose, and what indefatigable pains they took in this work, especially St. Paul, who *preached from Jerusalem to Illyricum*, which, according to the account which he gives of the journey, is computed to be no less than 2000 miles, and yet he made considerable stays in many places.

For a witness unto all nations; that is, that all nations might be convinced of the unreasonable obstinacy of the Jews, before God brought those dreadful calamities upon that nation.

And then shall the end come; that is, the final destruction of the Jews, the total desolation of the Jewish church and commonwealth, according to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. which puts these two signs together, *that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

Eighthly, The last and most immediate sign and Forerunner which he gave of their destruction, is *the standing of the abomination of desolation in the holy place*, ver. 15. *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the Prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place; then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.* There is a great difference among expositors what is here meant by *the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place*. Some refer it to the statue of Adrian the Emperor, placed where the temple was at Jerusalem. But that cannot be, because that was a long time after the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore could not be given by our Saviour for a sign

and forerunner of it. Others (as Capellus) refer it to the faction of the zealots, which before Titus came to beſiege Jeruſalem, ſeized upon the temple, and profaned it by bloodſhed and ſlaughter, and made ſo horrible a devaſtation in the city. And this would not be improbable, if St. Luke had not given us ſo clear an interpretation of it, Luke xxi. 20, 21, who, inſtead of *the abomination of deſolation*, mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark, puts the Roman Armies. *And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, then know that the deſolation thereof is nigh. Then let them that are in Judea flee into the mountains.* So that according to St. Luke, *the abomination of deſolation ſtanding in the holy place*, is the Roman *armies compaſſing Jeruſalem*; which therefore is called *the abomination of deſolation*, becauſe it would cauſe ſo great a deſolation among them: *When ye ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, then know that the deſolation thereof is nigh.* And it is ſaid *to ſtand in the holy place*, becauſe Jeruſalem was the holy city, and ſo many furlongs about it were accounted holy. Now when the Roman army ſhould approach within the limits of the holy Ground, then the *abomination of deſolation* might be ſaid *to ſtand in the holy place*: but the word, *abomination* ſeems particularly to refer to the Roman enſigns, upon which were the images of their Emperors, which the Romans worſhipped, as Suetonius expreſly tells us; and Tacitus calls them their *bellorum dii*, their *gods of war*. Now it was an abomination to the Jews to ſee theſe idols ſet up within the limits of the holy city. To which I may add what Joſephus tells us afterwards, that the Romans, after they had conquered the city, ſet up theſe enſigns in the ruins of the temple, and ſacrificed to them.

Ver. 15. *Then let them that be in Judea, flee into the mountains; and let him which is on the houſe top, not come down to take any thing out of his houſe: neither let him which is in the field, return back to take his cloaths;* which are ſeveral expreſſions to ſignify what haſte the Chriſtians ſhould make, when they

they saw the Romans making so near approaches to Jerusalem.

Let them which are in Judea flee into the mountains. Some refer this to the last siege by Titus; but I see no probability for that; for the Jews did not permit any to go out of the city. Others refer it to Vespasian's drawing his forces towards Jerusalem sometime before the siege, but hearing of the death of Nero the Emperor, he forbore to besiege it, till he had received orders from the new Emperor; and that this was a warning to the Christians, and they took their opportunity then to flee to the mountains. But this could not be neither, because for a good while before, the faction of the zealots under John, and Simon's faction, who lay without the city, did slay all who endeavoured to escape out of the city. If we limit these words to Jerusalem, (which the text does not) the most probable time was when Jerusalem was first compassed by the Roman army under Cestius Gallus, who afterwards withdrew his siege; and then indeed those that would, had liberty to flee away. And at this time Josephus doth say, that many did flee, foreseeing the approaching danger. But there is no reason to confine it to Jerusalem; for our Saviour's words are more large, *Then let them that are in Judea flee into the mountains.* And if so, there is an express passage in Josephus to this purpose, that when Titus was drawing up his forces towards Jerusalem, a great number of those who were at Jericho went from thence εἰς τὰ ὀρεινὰ, into the mountainous places, and thereby consulted their own safety.

Verse 15. *Let him that is on the house top not come to take any thing from thence.* Our Saviour alludes to the fashion of the Jewish houses which had plain roofs, upon which they used to walk; and he bids them make such haste, that when they saw this sign, they should not think of saving any thing in their houses, but betake themselves presently to the mountains for safety.

Ver. 16. *Neither let him that is in the field return back to take his cloaths.* Another expression to

ſignify what haſte they ſhould make from the approaching danger.

Verſe 17. *But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days;* becauſe of the impediment that this would be to their flight. Or poſſibly it may refer to the dreadful ſtory, not paralleled in any place or age, which Joſephus tells of one Mary, who in the time of the ſiege, out of very famine, boiled her ſucking child, and eat it. And therefore St. Luke xxi. 23. does mention this of the women's being with child, not as an impediment to flight, but as an inſtance of the great calamity that ſhould befal them. Luke xxi. 23. *But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days: for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people.*

Verſe 18. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the ſabbath-day.* Not in winter, becauſe of the hardneſs of the ſeaſon, and the difficulty of travelling and living upon the mountains; *nor on the ſabbath-day.* This concerned the Chriſtian Jews as well as others, moſt of which obſerved the Jewiſh law and rites after our Saviour's death, till the deſolation of the Jewiſh ſtate and temple, as appears out of the hiſtory of the Acts. For though St. Paul ſtood for the liberty of the Gentiles; yet it appears from Acts xxi. 21. that he vindicated himſelf from the calumny or aſperſion which was caſt upon him, as if he taught the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forſake Moſes, and that they ought not to circumciſe their children, nor to walk after their cuſtoms. So that the Chriſtian Jews retaining the obſervance of the Jewiſh ſabbath, upon which it was not lawful to go any farther than a ſabbath-day's journey, which was ſcarce two miles; if the danger ſhould happen at that time (as the Romans uſually took advantages to make all their onſets on that day, knowing the ſuperſtition of the Jews in that point) they muſt needs have been in great perplexity.

Having thus particularly treated of the ſigns which our

our Saviour foretold, as the forerunners of the destruction of Jerusalem, I proceed,

3. To consider the concomitant and subsequent circumstances of it. As,

1. The unparallelled greatness of their calamity.

2. The arising of false Christs.

3. Their being led into captivity, and dispersed up and down the world.

4. Their continuance in this captivity, and dispersed state out of their country, till the gospel had had its course among the Gentiles.

1. The unparallelled greatness of their calamity and destruction, verse 19. *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, neither ever shall be.* This is a very material circumstance in this prophecy, that the calamity of the Jews should be so strange and unparalleled as never was in the world before: For though it might easily have been foretold from the temper of the people, which was prone to sedition, that they were very like to provoke the Romans against them; yet there was no probability that all things should have come to that extremity; for it was not the design of the Roman Government to destroy any of these provinces which were under them, but only to keep them in subjection, and reduce them by reasonable severity in case of a revolt. But that such a calamity should have happened to them under Titus, who was the mildest, and farthest from severity of all mankind, nothing was more unlikely; and that any people should conspire together to their own ruin, and so blindly and obstinately run themselves into such calamities as made them the pity of their enemies, was the most incredible thing; so that nothing less than a prophetical spirit could have foretold so contingent and improbable a thing as this was.

St. Luke expresseth the dismal calamity that should happen to them, in other words, but much to the same sense, Luke xxi. 22, 23. *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But wo unto them that are with child, and to them*

them that give ſuck in thoſe days: for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people. And to this Joſephus fully gives teſtimony, as will appear both by what he ſays in general concerning their calamity, and by the particular account of their miſeries and ſufferings.

(1.) In general he tells us, That "never was any "age ſo fruitful of miſery as this was;" and almoſt in our Saviour's words, in his preface to his books of the ſiege of Jeruſalem, he ſays, That "all the calamities "that had fallen upon any nation from the beginning "of the world, were but ſmall in compariſon of what "happened to the nation of the Jews in that age." And in his ſixth book he ſays, That "as there was never any "nation ſo wicked, ſo never any nation ſuffered ſuch "calamitous accidents." But this will beſt appear,

(2.) By a brief and particular enumeration of their calamities. Not to mention the burning and deſtroying of ſeveral of their chief cities, as Zabulon, Gadara, Japha, Jotapatah, Joppa, and ſeveral others; I ſhall inſiſt chiefly upon the ſufferings of the people themſelves, by their tumults and ſeditions againſt the Romans. Before the coming of Veſpaſian, there were ſlain at Jeruſalem and in Syria 2000, at Aſkalon 2500, at Ptolemais 2000, at Alexandria 50000, at Joppa 8400, at Mount Aſamon 2000, at Damaſcus 10000, and afterwards at Aſkalon by Antonius a Roman commander 18000; in all, almoſt one hundred thouſand.

By Veſpaſian in Galilee and other parts, very great numbers; at Japha 15000, at Mount Gerizim 11600, at Jotapatah (the city of which Joſephus our hiſtorian was governor) 40000, at Joppa 4000, at Tarichæa near upon 8000, at Gamala 9000, at Giſchala 2000; in all fourſcore and ten thouſand.

Afterward, by their own ſeditions at Jeruſalem, 8500 at ſeveral times; and afterwards by the faction of the zealots 12000 of the chiefeſt and nobleſt of the citizens were ſlain at one time; at the river Jordan by Placidus 13000, beſides many thouſands drowned, ſo that the river was fillled up almoſt with dead

dead carcases. At two towns in Idumæa by Vespasian 10000, at Gerasa 1000; in all forty-five thousand.

Whilst Vespasian was thus wasting the cities of Judea, the faction of the zealots filled all places at Jerusalem, even the temple itself, with continual slaughters; and after they had conquered Ananus, who stood for the people, against the zealots, and got all into their own hands, they were divided into parties, and made slaughter of one another: and one party let in Simon, who headed a seditious multitude, which he brought out of the country; and after that they were subdivided into three parties, John's, and Eleazer's, and Simon's, which held several parts of the city, and day and night continued to destroy one another; in which seditions all their granaries of corn, and magazines of arms were burnt; so that though provision had been laid in the city, that would have sufficed for several years, yet before they came to be besieged by Titus, they were almost reduced to famine.

And after they were besieged, at the first they united a little against the Romans; yet after a few days, they divided again into factions, and more of them were slain by one another's hand, and with more cruelty than by the Romans; insomuch, that Titus the General of the Romans wept several times, to consider the misery they brought upon themselves; and their enemies were more pitiful towards them, than they to one another.

After two months siege, the famine began to rage within, and then all manner of cruelties were exercised by the soldiers upon that miserable people; and at last they were brought to such necessity, that many endeavoured to flee out to the enemy, and yet were not permitted; but as many as were suspected of any endeavour to escape, were cruelly killed. It is not to be imagined what barbarous inhumanities, in those straits, all exercised one toward another; snatching the meat out of one another's mouths, and from their dearest friends, and their very children.

And

And so obstinate were they, that neither those calamities which they suffered, nor the severity of the Romans in crucifying many thousands of them before the walls, and threatening them all with the same death, in case they would not yield, in ripping open the bowels of two thousand of them in a night, who fled out of Jerusalem, upon a report that they had swallowed gold, as many of them had; Josephus, *lib.* 6. *cap.* 15. nor all the kind messages of Titus, offering peace to them, and using all manner of intreaties and persuasions not to run upon their own ruin, could prevail with them to accept of a peace. And thus they continued, till by famine and force the city was taken, and then their provocation of the Romans to cruelty toward those they had got into their power was so great, that Titus was not able to with-hold the soldiers from exercising great cruelties toward them.

In short, from the beginning of the siege, to the taking of the city, there were famished and slain by the factions among themselves, and by the Romans, 1 10000, the greatest number, and with the saddest circumstances, that is to be read of in any story.

Was not this a time of great tribulation? Were not these days of vengeance indeed? Was there ever a sadder accomplishment of any prediction, than these words of our Saviour had?

And after all this, the temple was burnt and made desolate, the whole city destroyed, and all their whole land seized by the Roman Emperor, and the remnant of the people in other parts of the nation were prosecuted with great severity. Great numbers of Jews were destroyed at the taking of the castle of Herodion, and Machærus, and Masada, and in the thickets or woods of Jandes. And there were great slaughters of the Jews in other parts, at Antioch, and in all places about Alexandria and Thebes, and at Cyrene: so that it was visible that there was wrath upon this people.

Verse 22. *And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect*

ts sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the ys; that is, if those calamities had lasted a little long-, there would not one Jew have been left alive; *but r the elects sake,* that is, for the sake of those Christi-s who were left among them, *those days were short-ed;* God inclining the heart of Titus to shew pity ward the remnant, and not to suffer the nations to ercise any more cruelty toward them; particularly at ntioch, (the first seat of the Christians) Josephus tells , that when Titus came thither, the people petitioned n earnestly that they might expell the Jews, but he d them that was unreasonable, for now their country s laid waste, there was no place for them to go to. nus we see how *for the elects sake those days were rtened.*

2. Another circumstance which was to follow the de-ction of Jerusalem, was, *the arising of false Christs, d false prophets,* ver. 23, 24. *And then, if any man ll say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, he is there! ieve him not. For false Christs, and false prophets ll rise, and shall shew signs and wonders.* Such was nathan, who presently after the destruction of Jerusa-n, as Josephus tells us, drew many into the wilderness Cyrene, pretending that he would shew signs and nders to them; therefore our Saviour adds, ver. 25, . *Behold I have told you before. Wherefore, if they ll say unto you, Behold he is in the desart; go not th.* There appeared in Egypt, Crete and Cyprus, eral other impostors, who gave out themselves to be rists and false prophets, who applied the prophe-s of the Old Testament to these counterfeit Messi-s; as they did that of Balaam concerning a *star com-out of Jacob,* to Barchochebas, because his name nified *the son of a star.* And this was a notori-impostor, in the time of Adrian the Emperor, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, a-nt 20, (as I remember) Eusebius counts. He had great multitude followed him, which put to death ny Christians, because they would not renounce rist, and join with them against the Romans, and

that

that was the cauſe of the death of ſome hundred thouſands of them.

3. Another ſubſequent circumſtance, was the Jews being led into captivity, and diſperſed into all nations. This St. Luke adds, Luke xxi. 24. *They ſhall be led away captive into all nations.* I need not prove this out of hiſtory, we ſee the effect of it to this day.

4. That they ſhould continue in this captivity and diſperſed ſtate, and their city remain in the power of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled.* So alſo St. Luke tells us, verſe 24. *They ſhall be led away captive into all nations, and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, untill the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;* that, is, till the goſpel have had its courſe among the nations. And thus it is ſtill with them at this day; Jeruſalem is in the hands of other nations, and the captivity of the Jews continues; and when it ſhall end, God alone knows.

Having thus explained the particulars of our Saviour's prediction, concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, I ſhould in the next place proceed to make ſome reflexions upon this prediction, and its punctual accompliſhment; but this I reſerve for the following diſcourſe.

SER-

SERMON CCXL.

The evidences of the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.

The ſeventh ſermon on this text.

IN diſcourſing on the fourth evidence which thoſe who lived in our Saviour's time had of his divine authority, *viz.* the ſpirit of prophecy proved to be in him, and made good by the accompliſhment of his predictions, I came to conſider that remarkable prediction of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

In doing this, I propoſed three things:

Firſt, To explain the ſeries and order of this prediction.

Secondly, To conſider the particulars of it, as we find them in the 24th of St. Matthew, compared with the other two Evangeliſts.

Thirdly, To make ſome reflexions upon this prediction, and its punctual accompliſhment. The two former of theſe I have diſpatched, and now proceed to what remains, *viz.* The

Third thing I propounded, which was to make ſome reflexions upon this prediction of our Saviour's concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the punctual accompliſhment of it. And now that I have been ſo large in the explication of this prophecy, I ſhall make uſe of

this argument farther than I intended, not only to shew that those who lived in that age, and saw our Saviour's prediction so punctually answered by the event, might from hence be satisfied of the prophetick spirit of our Saviour; and consequently of his divine authority; but likewise to shew of what force to the conviction of the Jews this consideration is of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that long train of miserable consequences which followed upon it, and have lasted to this day.

And the reflexions I shall make upon this shall be these:

I. That nothing less than a prophetick spirit could so punctually have foretold so many contingents, and improbable things, as this prediction of our Saviour's does contain in it. Such were some of those signs which did forerun the destruction of Jerusalem, as the great famine which happened under Claudius; the several great earthquakes under Claudius and Nero; the universal publication of the gospel all over the Roman empire, in so short a space; those wonderful sights, and prodigious signs from heaven, so strange as are not to be parallelled in any history. And such likewise were the circumstances of the destruction of the city and the temple; as that it should be an utter desolation, which was strangely accomplished, when, as Josephus tells us, the very mountain upon which the temple stood, was almost burnt up and consumed with the fierceness of the fire; and the Roman history gives account of the plucking up of the very foundations of the temple by Turnus Rufus: But the most remarkable circumstance of all, which is so fully expressed by our Saviour in this prediction, was the strange and unexampled calamities which should attend this destruction, such as never befel any people before, which our Saviour foretells in these words, *Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time; nor ever shall be.* And never had any words a more sad and full accomplishment than this part of our Saviour's prophecy had in those woful miseries which befel

befel that people by civil and inteſtine ſeditions, and the utmoſt extremity that famine could reduce a people to; beſides the cruelties of a foreign enemy. No hiſtory makes mention of ſo vaſt a number of men, that in ſo ſhort a time did periſh in ſuch ſad circumſtances; fourteen or fifteen hundred thouſand within leſs than a year's ſpace, and more of theſe by far cruelly murdered by one another's hands, than by the Romans. So that theſe were *days of vengeance*, and *of great tribulation*, ſuch as the world had never ſeen before, and *if they had not been ſhortened, no fleſh could have been ſaved*, as our Saviour adds in the prophecy; if things had gone on at that rate a little longer, not one of the Jewiſh nation would have been left alive.

Now that our Saviour ſhould foretel ſo punctually the ſad calamity of this people, I take to be one of the moſt material circumſtances of this prophecy; and to be a thing ſo contingent and unlikely, that it could not have been foreſeen, but by divine inſpiration. For though one might eaſily have foretold, from the temper of the people which was prone to ſedition, and very impatient of the Roman government, that the Jews were very likely in a ſhort time to provoke the Romans againſt them; yet there was no probability at all, that things ſhould have come to that extremity; for it was not in the deſign of the Roman government to deſtroy any of their provinces; but that ſuch a calamity ſhould have happened unto them under Titus, who was the mildeſt, and fartheſt from cruelty of all mankind, nothing was more unlikely; that ever any people ſhould have been ſo beſotted, as the Jews were at that time, and have ſo madly conſpired together to their own ruin, as they did; that they ſhould ſo blindly and obſtinately run themſelves into ſuch calamities, as made them the pity of their very enemies, was the moſt incredible thing in the world. Nothing but a prophetick ſpirit could have foretold an event ſo contingent, and ſo extremely improbable.

II. Not only thoſe who lived in that age were ca-

pable of satisfaction concerning the accomplishment of this prediction of our Saviour; but that we also might receive full satisfaction concerning this, the providence of God hath so ordered it, as to preserve to us a more punctual and credible history of the destruction of Jerusalem, than there is of any other matter whatsoever so long since done.

And this is more considerable than possibly at first we may imagine. For,

1. We have this matter related not by a Christian, (who might have been suspected of partiality, and a design to have parallelled the event with our Saviour's prediction) but by a Jew, both by nation and religion, who seems designedly to have avoided, as much as possibly he could, the very mention of the Christian name, and all particulars relating to our Saviour, tho' no historian was ever more punctual in all other things.

2. We have this matter related by one that was an eye-witness of all those sad calamities that befel the nation of the Jews, and during the war in Galilee against Vespasian, was one of their chief commanders, and being taken by the Romans, was in their camp all the time that Jerusalem was besieged.

3. As he was an eye-witness, and so able to give the truest account of those matters, so hath he always had the repute of a most faithful historian. Joseph Scaliger, who was a very good judge in these matters, gives this character of him, that he was "*Di-*
"*ligentissimus καὶ φιλαληθέστατος, omnium scriptorum;*
"the most painful historian, and the greatest lover of
"truth, of any that he had ever read; *De quo nos hoc*
"*audacter dicimus, non solùm in rebus Judaicis, sed*
"*etiam in externis, tutius illi credi quàm omnibus*
"*Græcis & Latinis historicis;* of whom, *says he,* I
"might confidently affirm, that not only in the Jewish
"affairs, but in all foreign matters, one may more safe-
"ly rely upon his credit, than upon all the Greek and
"Latin historians put together."

4. There is no ancient history extant, that relates any matter with so much particularity of circumstances,

stances. as Josephus does that of the Jewish wars, especially the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

5. That the providence of God may appear the more remarkable in this history, which is the only punctual one that hath been preserved down to us of this great action, it will be worth our observation to consider, how remarkably this person was preserved for the writing of this history.

When Vespasian made war upon Galilee, Josephus was chief commander there, and was besieged there by Vespasian, in the city Jotapatah, which, after a long and stout resistance being taken by the Romans, he with forty more hid themselves in a cave, where at last they were discovered by the Romans; which Vespasian hearing of, sent and offered them life; and Josephus would have accepted of their offer, but the rest would not permit him to yield himself, but threatned to kill him; and when by no persuasions he could take them off from this obstinate resolution, he was glad to propound this to them, that they should cast lots, two by two, who should die first, and he that had the second lot should kill the first, and the next him, and so on, and the last should kill himself: The providence of God preserved Josephus and another to the last lot; and when all the rest were killed, Josephus perswaded him to yield himself up to the Romans, and so they two escaped with their lives, by which remarkable providence he was preserved to write this history.

III. It seems very plain from this relation which Josephus gives, that the Jewish nation were remarkably devoted by God to destruction, and most fatally hardened and blinded to their own ruin. This Josephus every where takes notice of, that there was a sad and black fate hung over the nation, and God seemed to have determined their ruin. And after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the castle of Masada was besieged by the Romans, Eleazer the Governor in his speech to the soldiers, reckons up the sad symptoms of God's displeasure against them; and tells them, that from the beginning of the war it was easy for any one to conjecture that God in great

wrath had devoted the nation (which he formerly loved) to deſtruction.

And indeed all along the hand of God was very viſible againſt them; for when in the beginning of their rebellion, Ceſtius Gallus the Roman commander had an opportunity to have taken Jeruſalem, and to have put an end to the war, Joſephus tells us, that God being angry with them, would not permit it, but did reſerve them for a greater and ſadder deſtruction. And afterward when Veſpaſian renewed the war againſt them, Joſephus tells us, that he uſed all kind of earneſt perſuaſion with his countrymen to prevent their ruin, by ſubmitting to the Roman government; but they were obſtinate, and would not hearken to any moderate counſels. And when the ſedition of the zealots began in Jeruſalem, Joſephus takes notice that all the wiſeſt men among them, and thoſe who were moſt likely, by their intereſt and moderation to have ſaved the city, were firſt of all cut off by the zealots, ſo that there were none left to perſuade the people to moderate things.

They provoked the Romans againſt them all manner of ways; their ſeditions among themſelves continued when the enemy was before their walls; and when in probability they might have held out ſo long as to have wearied the Romans, by their own ſeditions they burnt all their granaries, and proviſions of corn, and magazines of arms, as if they had conſulted the advantage of the Romans againſt themſelves; and which was very remarkable, Joſephus tells us, that before the ſiege, the fountain of Siloam was almoſt dried up, and all the ſprings about Jeruſalem, ſo that water bore a great price; but as ſoon as Titus came before Jeruſalem, the ſprings brake out again, and there was never greater plenty; which if it had not happened, the Roman armies could very hardly have ſubſiſted. And after the temple was deſtroyed, when Titus would have given John and Simon, and the reſt of the zealots their lives, they would not ſubmit, but were all deſtroyed by their own obſtinacy. At Maſada, rather than yield to the Romans, 900 men, women, and children,

dren, killed one another; so that when the Romans entered the castle, they found them all dead except one woman and a child, that had hid themselves.

Philostratus tells us, that when some of the nearer nations would have crowned Titus for his victories over the Jews, he refused it, saying, That he deserved nothing upon that account, for it was not his work, but God had made him the instrument of his wrath against that people. So that there were never greater acknowledgments of a divine hand against any people, than at this time against the Jews. Never was there greater courage and contempt of death in any people; and yet they were conquered by numbers much inferior to them. Never was any soldier so merciful as Titus was, and so solicitous to have spared the effusion of blood; and yet he was necessitated against his nature to exercise great cruelties toward them. Many times he endeavoured by the most severe inhibitions to restrain the cruelties of the soldiers towards them; and when he found that they ript open the bowels of the Jews who fled out of Jerusalem, in hopes to find gold which they had swallowed, he was much enraged against the soldiers; and would have put all to death that were engaged in that cruelty, but that he found them so many; and notwithstanding this, when he forbad the like cruelty to be exercised for the future, under the most severe penalties, yet Josephus says, that the soldiers did not forbear privately to do it; and though in other cases such a severe prohibition would have taken place, yet, says he, because God had devoted that people to ruin, all the ways which Titus used for the saving of them, turned to their destruction, *lib.* 6. *cap.* 15. Nay, there was as much blood shed by the dissensions among themselves, between those who desired peace with the Romans, and those that would not hearken to it, as by the Romans. So much reason was there for that passionate wish of our Saviour's concerning Jerusalem, *O that thou hadst known, in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Never was any nation so infatuated; never were

were *the things that tended to peace* so strangely *hid* from any people, as from the Jews.

IV. It must needs be, that it was for some very great sin that God sent those dreadful calamities upon that nation. Josephus says, That it was sure for some greater impiety than that nation were guilty of, when they were carried away captive to Babylon. Nay, he says, that the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were but small in comparison of those the Jews were guilty of; so that he says, that they were so ripe for destruction, that if the Roman army had not come when it did, he did verily believe, that either an earthquake would have swallowed up the city, or a deluge overflown them, or fire from heaven have consumed them; which is very much the same with that the Apostle says of them, 1 Thess. ii. 16. that they were *filling up the measure of their sins, that wrath might come upon them to the uttermost.*

Now what can we imagine their great sin should be at that time? All along the history of the Old Testament, usually the great sin whereby they provoked God, was their idolatry, for which God sent many judgments upon them, and at last sold them into captivity. But when this desolation came upon them, and for a long time before, even ever after the captivity, they had been free from that great transgression, and were mightily bent against idolatry, so that they would rather die than commit that sin.

The account which Josephus gives of their sin, was their intestine seditions, and the cruelties and profanations of the temple that were consequent upon them. But that this could not be the original provocation is plain, because by the acknowledgment of Josephus and the Jews themselves, this was the greatest judgment and calamity that came upon them; yea, much greater than any thing which they suffered by the Romans; yea, so great, that it rendered them the pity of their very enemies; and when the Romans would have granted peace to them, and gladly have put an end to those miseries they saw them involved in, yet they continued their intestine seditions,

seditions, and would not be taken off from destroying one another.

Let them then give us any probable account, for what great sin it was that God first gave them up to this great judgment of an industrious endeavour to destroy one another; or if they cannot, let them believe the account which the history of the New Testament gives of it, and the truth whereof was so remarkably confirmed by the fulfilling of our Saviour's predictions against them. The Apostle gives a clear account of their sin, in the forementioned place, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. that it was because *they had killed the Lord Jesus, and their own Prophets, and persecuted the Apostles:* by these steps they *filled up their sins, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.*

V. The punishment that was inflicted upon them, hath very shrewd marks and signatures upon it, from which it is easy to conjecture for what sin it was that they were thus punished. Titus laid his siege to Jerusalem at the very same time and season that the Jews crucified Christ, namely, at the time of the passover; and the very day that he began his siege, he crucified one before their walls, and afterwards, almost the only cruelty that the Romans exercised toward them by the command and permission of Titus, was crucifixion; insomuch that sometimes five hundred were crucified in a day, till they wanted wood for crosses. So that they who earnestly cried out against our Saviour, *Crucify, crucify,* had at last enough, God made them *eat the fruit of their own ways, and filled them with their own devices:* and they who had bought Christ for thirty pieces of silver, were afterward themselves sold at a lower rate.

VI. Their religion was remarkably struck at, and affronted, as if God intended to put an end to that dispensation, and to abrogate their law. Most of their great calamities happened to them upon the sabbath-day, and upon their great festivals. Cestius Gallus sat down with his army before Jerusalem on the sabbath. Titus besieged them at the time of the passover. And Jerusalem was taken (as Dio in his Roman history observes) on the

the ſabbath-day, that day for which the Jews have ſo great a veneration. The zealots profaned the temple by making it a garriſon, and by the rapine and bloodſhed committed in it; they brought the prieſthood into contempt, by chooſing the meaneſt of the people into the higheſt offices; they turned the materials of the temple into inſtruments of war. The Romans themſelves were as much grieved to ſee how the Jews profaned their temple, as the Jews themſelves ought to have been, if it had been ſo profaned by the Romans; they are the very words of Joſephus. And though Titus gave expreſs orders, and uſed great endeavours to have ſaved the temple, and hazarded himſelf to have quenched it when it was on fire; yet he could not do it, but it was burnt to the ground: And afterward when the Prieſts came to him, and ſupplicated to him for their lives, contrary to his uſual clemency, he commanded them to be ſlain, ſaying they came too late; that it was fit they ſhould periſh with the temple, and now that was deſtroyed, for the ſake of which they ſhould have been ſaved, he ſaw no reaſon to ſpare them. Afterward the Roman enſigns were ſet up upon the ruins of the temple, and the ſoldiers ſacrificed to them; and their law was carried in triumph at Rome before Veſpaſian and Titus.

Theſe were as great ſigns as could be, that God had a deſign to abrogate and put a period to that adminiſtration; eſpecially if we take in this which Ammianus Marcellinus a heathen hiſtorian tells us, that this temple could never be rebuilt, though it was attempted by the Jews ſeveral times, and that whenever they went about to lay the foundation, fire broke out of the foundation and conſumed the workmen.

I will but add one circumſtance more, to ſhew that that diſpenſation was at an end. God ſeemed to have wholly given over his particular care of that people, and to have no longer regard to the covenant made with them, in which he had promiſed, that when they came up three times a year, from

all

all parts of the land, to ſerve the Lord, he would ſo order things by his providence, that the enemy ſhould make no advantage of their abſence from their borders; nay, the enemy ſhould not then deſire their land: and yet notwithſtanding this, at the time of the paſſover, when the whole nation were met at Jeruſalem, Titus came upon them, and encloſed them all in the city.

VII. And *laſtly*, Conſider how God hath purſued the Jews with great ſeverity ever ſince, making them to be ſtigmatized and hated in all nations; great cruelties and oppreſſions have frequently been exerciſed towards them; and by a ſtrange providence God hath kept them diſtinct from other people, that they might remain as a monument of his diſpleaſure; and conſidering how other colonies of people have fallen in, and been mixed with the inhabitants in an age or two, ſo as they could never be kept diſtinct for any long time; that the Jews for 1600 years ſhould ſtill remain ſo, as it is an argument of the ſpecial providence of God, ſo it is one of the moſt material and ſtanding evidences of the truth of our religion, that they ſhould remain ſtill as witneſſes of the Old Teſtament; and as monuments of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the fierce wrath which God executed upon them for the crucifying of Chriſt.

Upon the whole matter, if ſo particular a prediction as this of our Saviour's concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, ſo punctually anſwered by the event, be not an argument of divine inſpiration, then there can be no evidence of any ſuch thing as a ſpirit of prophecy. For what greater evidence of a true Prophet, than to foretel ſo many things, ſo contingent and improbable; all which have accordingly afterward fallen out, juſt as they were foretold?

Suppoſe the Jews ſay true, that Jeſus Chriſt was an impoſtor, and conſequently juſtly put to death by them: What greater reflexion upon the providence of God can be imagined, than that this perſon ſhould be permitted to foretel, that ſuch and ſuch calamities ſhould befal thoſe that had put him to death, as a puniſhment upon them for that ſin; and afterward all this ſhould happen in ſo remarkable a manner, as the world cannot give the like inſtance?

inſtance? Is it in the leaſt credible, that the divine pro vidence ſhould permit ſuch things as of neceſſity wil give credit to an impoſtor, and would be good evidenc to a prudent and conſiderate man, that he was divinel inſpired?

I have now done with the *fourth* head of our Saviour' predictions, namely his prophecy of the deſtruction o Jeruſalem; which I have been the longer upon, becauſ it is ſo conſiderable an evidence of the truth of our reli gion, and ſo ſtrong an argument againſt the Jews, tha if they are not wrought upon by the conſideration of the accompliſhment of this prediction of our Saviour's, and the great ſeverity of God ſtill continued toward that na tion, it can be aſcribed to nothing but the juſt judgment of God, ſtill *hiding the things of their peace from their eyes*, and giving them up to the ſame kind of fatal hard neſs and blindneſs, which ſixteen hundred years ago was the cauſe of their deſtruction.

There remains yet one inſtance more of our Saviour's prophetick ſpirit, which I muſt reſerve for another diſ courſe.

SER-

SERMON CCXLI.

The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The eighth sermon on this text.

I Am still upon the *fourth* evidence, which those who lived in our Saviour's time had of his divine authority, *viz.* the spirit of prophecy proved to be in him, and made good by the accomplishment of his predictions. Four instances I have already given, and now proceed to the

Fifth and *last* instance I shall give of our Saviour's prophetick spirit, *viz.* in those predictions which foretel the state of the gospel in the world; what discouragements and difficulties the first publishers of the gospel should meet with from the persecution which the powers of the world should stir up against them, and from the rising of false Christs and false prophets; what assistance they should find in the carrying on the work; and what success the gospel should have, notwithstanding the opposition that should be made against it. I shall speak briefly to these.

I. What discouragements and difficulties the first publishers of the gospel should meet with. Our Saviour foretells two great discouragements.

1. From the perſecutions which the powers of the world ſhould ſtir up againſt them. This our Saviour gave his diſciples early notice of, when he firſt called them together, and ſent them forth, Matth. x. 16, 17, 18. *Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves. Be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will ſcourge you in their ſynagogues. And ye ſhall be brought before Governors and Kings for my ſake.* And ver. 21, 22. *And the brother ſhall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children ſhall riſe up againſt their parents, and cauſe them to be put to death. And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake.* And that the diſciples might not be ſurpriſed with this, when it ſhould happen, as an unexpected thing, a little before his death, when he foretold the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, he repeats this prediction to them again, as you may ſee, Matth. xxiv. 9. *Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you? and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name's ſake.* And Luke xxi. 12. *But before all theſe they ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you, delivering you up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before Kings and Rulers for my name's ſake.*

And all this we find punctually fulfilled in thoſe perſecutions that they met with at Jeruſalem, and in other places wherever they went to preach the goſpel, as you may read at large in the hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, and afterward in the perſecutions raiſed againſt the Chriſtians by the Roman Emperors, wherein all kind of cruelties and tortures were exerciſed upon them, and the Chriſtians killed by thouſands in a day, as if they would have deſtroyed the very name of Chriſt out of the world, as every one knows that is acquainted with eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

Particularly he foretold the two ſons of Zebedee, James and John, that they ſhould be put to death, Matth. xx. 23. ſaith he unto them, *ye ſhall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptiſm that*

hat I am baptized with. And this accordingly happened o them, for we find Acts xii. 2. that James was slain by Herod. Indeed St. John lived a great while after, as ur Saviour foretold, John xxi. 22. *That John should arry till he came;* that is, he should live till the de- ruction of Jerusalem, which is very frequently in the vangelists called *Christ's coming;* and so he did, and t last was put to death by the sword, as St. Chrysostom ith; though Justin, Irenæus, Clemens Alex. say no- ing of it; and Origen and Tertullian say, he died an- ther death.

He likewise foretold Peter what kind of death he ould die; namely, that when he was old he should e crucified, John xxi. 18, 19. *Verily, verily, I say nto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thy lf, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when hou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, nd another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither hou wouldst not.* And the Evangelist adds, *This ake he, signifying by what death he should glorify od.* And accordingly he was crucified about forty ears after, as Eusebius tells us, and several of the Fa- hers.

2. Another great discouragement which our Saviour oretold they should meet with in the publishing of the ospel, was, from the rising of false Christs and false rophets. This our Saviour foretells, in the 24th of St. Matthew, ver. 5. 24. That *many should come in his ame, and should deceive many;* that there should *arise alse Christs, and false prophets, and shew great signs nd wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they hould deceive the very elect.* And this I have already hewn was fulfilled in those many impostors, that rose p among the Jews, pretending themselves to be Mes- ias's, and drawing many people after them, both before nd after the destruction of Jerusalem; and in Simon, nd the other heads of the Gnostick sect, who did great prejudice to Christianity, *by turning the grace of God into wantonness*, and abusing the holy doctrine of our Saviour to all manner of licentiousness, and drawing of

Christians, not only to loose and filthy practices, but to a denial of the gospel for fear of persecution, and at last to join with the Heathen in the persecuting of the Christians.

II. Our Saviour likewise foretold what assistance the Apostles should find in the carrying on their work. He promised that he would be with them in the preaching of the gospel, Matth. xxviii. 20. More particularly before his ascension, he told them that they should receive power by the coming of the Holy Ghost upon them, whereby they should be qualified to be *witnesses unto him, in Judea, and Jerusalem, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth*, Acts i. 8. and Matth. x. 19, 20. Our Saviour promiseth that his Spirit should direct them what to say, when they should be accused before Kings and Governors: *When they deliver you up, take no thought how, or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: For it is not you that speak; but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* And again, to the same purpose, he encourageth them a little before his death, Luke xxi. 14, 15. *Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth, and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.*

And all this we find was made good to them after our Saviour's ascension. They were wonderfully assisted, and carried on above themselves in the preaching of the gospel. So the Evangelist St. Mark tells us, Mark xvi. 20. That the Apostles *went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* And all along in the history of the Acts, we find that they were extraordinarily strengthened and assisted in the publishing of the gospel. And particularly our Saviour's prediction and promise was made good to St. Stephen, of whom it is said, Acts vi. 10. that when he was disputing with the Jews, *They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

III. Our

III. Our Saviour foretold also what success the gospel should have, notwithstanding all the opposition that should be made against it; that it should be *published in all nations*, Matth. xxiv. 14. and in despite of all the malice of the Jews, and the potent opposition that the Gentiles should make against the publishers of the gospel, they should *make disciples in every nation, and bear witness unto Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth*, Matth. xxviii. 19. and Acts i. 8. That he would *build his church upon a rock, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it*, Matth. xvi. 18. And this we find was done with great success, both among the Jews and Gentiles, as appears out of the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and other histories of the first ages of the church.

Particularly our Saviour foretold that that act of kindness which Mary shewed to him, in anointing his head with precious ointment, should be remembered wherever the gospel was preached, Matth. xxvi. 13. *Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.* And accordingly this little particular history hath every where been propagated with the gospel, and the fame of it hath spread as far as the notice of Christianity.

And thus I have done with the fourth and last evidence of our Saviour's divine authority, namely, the prophetick spirit which was proved to be in him, and made good by the punctual accomplishment of his predictions. I shall only shew that these instances which I have given, are clear arguments of a prophetick spirit in our Saviour. And this will appear, if we consider these two things:

First, That all these things which our Saviour foretold were purely contingent in respect of us; that is, there was no necessity that they should come to pass; and consequently nothing but infinite knowledge could certainly foresee that they would.

Secondly, All or most of them, were not only contingent, but exceeding unlikely; there was no pro-

bability that they ſhould happen; and conſequently, no one could reaſonably and prudently have foreſeen that they would. And theſe two things being made out, will abundantly evidence, that the foretelling of theſe things doth argue a prophetick ſpirit in our Saviour; and conſequently his divine authority. Things that have neceſſary cauſes, if thoſe cauſes be evident, any one may foretel that they will be; things that are probable, and likely to happen, every prudent man may reaſonably conjecture that they will be, and conſequently may in many caſes ſucceſsfully foretel them without a ſpirit of prophecy: but ſuch things as in reſpect of us are purely contingent, and depend upon no neceſſary cauſes we know of, eſpecially if they be withal unlikely to come to paſs, no man can foretel but by the inſpiration of that ſpirit, whoſe infinite wiſdom knows all things; and this is the true reaſon why the foretelling of future contingents hath always been looked upon as an argument of inſpiration.

Firſt, Theſe things which our Saviour foretold, were purely contingent; that is, there was no neceſſity in human reaſon that they ſhould come to paſs; and conſequently no man without inſpiration could certainly foretel them. Thoſe things are ſaid to be contingent in reſpect of us, which have no neceſſary cauſe that we know of; particularly thoſe things which depend upon the will of free agents, either the will of men, or of God. And ſuch were thoſe things which our Saviour foretold; many of them depended upon the will of men; whether they ſhould happen or not, ſuppoſing the permiſſive will of God; that is, that God had determined not to interpoſe and hinder them.

The death of Chriſt, with all the wicked and opprobrious circumſtances of it, depended upon the will of men; and therefore it was a thing that no man could foreſeee whether it would be or not. So likewiſe the reſiſtance and oppoſition that was made to the goſpel by the perſecutions of men, and the malice of falſe prophets, did depend upon the wills of men.

But

But many of these events depended purely upon the will of God, which no man could foreknow, unless he did reveal it to him; and if he did, this was an argument of inspiration, which is the thing we are contending for. Of this kind were, the resurrection of our Saviour from the dead; his being taken up into heaven; the miraculous powers and gifts wherewith the Apostles and primitive Christians were endued; the fatal destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, contrary to the design of those who brought it to pass; the prevalency of the gospel in the world, in despite of all opposition made against it. All these were brought to pass in a more immediate manner by the power of God, and therefore depended purely upon his will.

Secondly, Most of the things which our Saviour foretold, were not only purely contingent in respect of us, and therefore could not without inspiration be certainly foreseen; but were also exceeding unlikely, and improbable in themselves, and therefore could not so much as prudently have been conjectured. And to make this out more fully, I shall run over the several instances of our Saviour's predictions, and shew how unlikely the things which he foretold, were to have come to pass; and if this appear, it must be granted that our Saviour was a Prophet.

1. Our Saviour's prediction concerning his own death and sufferings, was a thing very unlikely to have come to pass. It was very likely that the Pharisees and chief Priests, whose interest was so much struck at, should have malice enough against him, to design his ruin; but that ever they should have accomplished it without a popular tumult and sedition, was very unlikely, considering the esteem and favour he had among the people. Who could have believed that the Jews, who had seen so many of his miracles, and received so great benefits by them, who were such admirers of his doctrine, and so astonished at it, who *would have made him King*, should ever have consented to have put him to death? Who could have thought, that so soon after

they

they had so unanimously brought him to Jerusalem in triumph with such hosanna's and acclamations, the same people should have been so eager to have him crucified? I know there is nothing more inconstant, than the giddy and fickle multitude; nothing less to be relied upon than the opinion and applause of the people: but because the humour of the people is so uncertain, therefore for this reason it was hard to prophesy what they would do. And nothing was more improbable, than that any should certainly foretel where this humour would at last fix and settle. Nay, it was very unlikely that they who had been raised to so great and just an esteem of him, from a clear conviction of his innocency and holiness, and of the divine power which attended him, should have had either the wickedness, or the confidence to have gone about to compass the death of so innocent and divine a person.

And it is very remarkable, that this was a thing so incredible to the disciples, that though our Saviour did several times, in the plainest words that could be, tell them of his death and sufferings, yet they could not understand it; that is, it could by no means sink into them, they could not apprehend that ever any such thing should come to pass, Mark ix. 31, 32. *For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.* And Luke ix. 43, 44, 45. after our Saviour had done a great miracle, it is said, *they were all amazed at the mighty power of God: But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and they feared to ask him of that saying.* They looked upon it as a thing incredible, that he who did such works, and was attended with such a divine power, should ever be delivered into the hands

of

of men; if men should be so malicious as to design his death, yet it was not credible that God should give up such a person into their hands. And again, a little before his sufferings, he inculcates this more particularly upon them, Luke xviii. 31, 32, 33, 34. *Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit upon; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death.* And then it is said of the disciples, that *they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.* What was the matter? Could any thing have been said in plainer words, than our Saviour's declaring this to them? No certainly, they understood very well the meaning of those words; for it is said, Matth. xvii. 23. that *when he said this unto them, they were exceeding sorry*, they were very much troubled to hear him say this; they understood very well what the words signified, and they were troubled at the first appearance and literal sense of them: but it seems they took them to be a parable, and to have some allegorical meaning hidden under them; for they could not imagine, that ever they should be literally true. And that this was their apprehension, seems to be sufficiently intimated by both the Evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke, who after they had told us, that *the disciples understood not this saying*, they immediately add, that they *feared to ask Christ of this saying*; that is, they did not understand whether they were to take this saying in the literal and obvious sense of it; or to look upon it as an allegory or a parable that had some hidden sense; but being troubled at the saying, because the obvious and literal sense had a great deal of horror, they were afraid to ask our Saviour the meaning of it, (as they used always to ask him the meaning of his parables) for fear he should tell them, that he intended it literally. Now from this it appears, how unlikely it seemed to the disciples, that

that our Saviour ſhould ſuffer ſuch things as he foretold of himſelf.

2. Our Saviour's predictions concerning his riſing again out of the grave the third day; concerning his being taken up into heaven; concerning the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles, in ſuch miraculous powers and gifts after his aſcenſion, were all things very unlikely and incredible, becauſe ſo exceeding ſtrange, and above the common courſe of nature. We look upon it as a wonderful thing, for a man certainly to foretel an ordinary thing: but if any man ſhould tell us, that after he was dead, and had lain three days in the grave, he ſhould riſe again, and be viſibly taken up into heaven, and from thence beſtow miraculous gifts upon men, and this ſhould accordingly come to paſs; it were impoſſible not to think this man a Prophet.

3. Our Saviour's prediction concerning the fatal deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the Jewiſh nation, was very unlikely. But this I ſpake to at large, when I explained the prophecy.

4. The fate which our Saviour foretold the goſpel ſhould have in the world, was a thing very improbable. That it ſhould meet with great oppoſition and perſecution was not ſtrange; nothing being more likely than that a religion which was new to the world, ſo contrary to the principles of thoſe who had been educated in another religion, and ſo oppoſite to the intereſts of men, ſhould be oppoſed and reſiſted to the utmoſt: But then there are theſe three things very ſtrange, which our Saviour foretold ſhould attend the publication of the goſpel.

(1.) That an action of no greater conſideration than that was, of Mary's anointing of our Lord's head, and done privately, ſhould be celebrated through the world in all ages; and the memory of it ſhould be as far, and as long propagated, as the moſt famous actions of the greateſt Prince that ever was in the world.

(2.) This was ſtrange and unlikely, which our Saviour likewiſe foretold, that falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets and teachers ſhould ariſe after his death; that after the

the Jews had been so severe to our Saviour, for giving out himself to be the Messias, though he gave such convincing evidence of it, this should not deter counterfeits from assuming so dangerous a person; and that when Christianity was persecuted, there should arise false apostles, and false teachers, that should pretend to Christianity, when it was so odious a profession; that any should be found that should dissemble in a matter so full of hazard and danger; this was very strange and unlikely.

But because this prediction of our Saviour's concerning false Christs and false prophets, is aspersed by the atheists, and particularly by Vaninus, as one of the most cunning and crafty actions that our Saviour did; as if after he had let himself into a reputation and esteem in the world, he had designed by this prediction to bolt the door against all others; therefore it will be requisite that I speak a little more particularly to this.

1. It is acknowledged by the atheists themselves, particularly by Vaninus, that it does not appear that our Saviour carried on any worldly design. Why then should he be suspected of it in this matter, which is capable of a good interpretation; when his whole life, and all the actions of it, do clear him of any such suspicion? But because it is said, that though he carried on no design for riches and power, yet he had a deep design to gain reputation and fame to himself in after-ages; therefore I shall add one or two considerations more, to shew how unreasonable, and how perfectly malicious this jealousy is.

2. Let us consider then, that this prediction of his would either be accomplished, or not: but whether it was, or was not, it can be no argument of any design of vain glory. If it had not come to pass, (as I have shewn it was very unlikely it should, especially within the compass of the time which he had prefixed for it) then he had been a false prophet, and so he had lost his reputation, by the very means whereby he intended to have established it, which I do not understand the craft and cunning of: for either he knew certainly that it would

would come to pass, or not; if he did, he was a true Prophet; if he did not, he did not do politickly, in putting his reputation upon such a hazard.

3. If we suppose him, as this objection does, to have been an impostor, and consequently not to have believed his own doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and another life after this; what an apparent madness had it been to neglect the present advantages of this world, which he was capable of enjoying; and to lay out for a fame and reputation, after he was dead and extinguished, and consequently when he should not be capable of having any sense and enjoyment of it!

And the instance of the Romans, who ventured their lives out of vain glory, to get a name after they were dead, will avail nothing in this case; because it plainly appears from all the Heathen writers, that they did this upon a presumption of their immortality, and a persuasion that they should live in another world, and enjoy the pleasure of the fame by which their names should be celebrated in this world: but had they not been persuaded of this, it would have been the greatest folly in the world, to have ventured their lives to gain a fame after death, and to be spoken of with honour when they were not, and consequently could take no pleasure in it. This may suffice to be said in short, to this malicious and absurd objection. But,

(3.) This is strange and unlikely, that the gospel should have such success in the world. And the more likely it was, that it should meet with so much opposition and resistance, the more unlikely was it that it should prevail, especially by such means, and in such manner as it did; that a few unlearned men, destitute of secular arts and learning, opposed by all the wit and power that the world could exert, should be able in the space of a few years to propagate and plant all over the known world a doctrine so despised and persecuted, so contrary to the almost invincible prejudice of education in another religion, so opposite to those two great governors of the world, the lusts and the interests of men; nothing could have

have been foretold so unlikely and improbable as this is; especially if we take in this, that the chief instrument of spreading this doctrine in the world, was the fiercest oppoſer and persecutor of it, I mean St. Paul, who, by a light and voice from heaven was taken off from persecuting Christianity, and became the most active and zealous instrument of its propagation. The wonderful success and prevalency of the gospel by such means, and in such circumstances of difficulty, and potent opposition made against it, are a plain indication, that this doctrine was assisted and countenanced from heaven; that *it was of God, and therefore could not be overthrown.* Nothing but the mighty force of truth could, naked and unarmed, have done such wonders in the world.

And thus I have, I hope, fully shewn that those who lived in the age of our Saviour, were capable of having sufficient assurance, that Jesus Christ, who declared the Christian religion to the world, was sent of God: From the prophecies concerning him; the testimonies that were given him by an immediate voice from heaven; the miracles that were wrought by him, and on his behalf; and by the prophetick spirit that gave evidence of his inspiration. And if any one doubt whether he gave these testimonies of his divine authority to the world, let him consider that it is almost as great a miracle as any of those, that a doctrine preached by one that gave no testimony of his divine authority to the world, should be so strangely propagated, and maintain its possession so long in the world; I say, let him consider this, and methinks this should convince him of the truth of Christianity.

SERMON CCXLII.

The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them.

The ninth sermon on this text.

IN discoursing of the evidence of our Saviour's divine authority, I proposed the considering three things:

First, What evidence they had, who heard the doctrine of the gospel immediately from our Saviour.

Secondly, What evidence they had, who received this doctrine by the preaching of the Apostles.

Thirdly, What evidence after-ages have, until the present time.

The first of these I have handled at large; and now proceed to the

Second, viz. To consider what assurance those who heard the doctrine of Christ from the Apostles, were capable of having concerning his divine authority: And of this I shall give you an account in these three particulars:

First, They had all the assurance concerning this matter which men can have of any thing from the testimony of credible eye and ear witnesses.

Secondly, They had this testimony confirmed by miracles.

Thirdly, They had yet a farther evidence of the di-

divinity of this doctrine, from the wonderful prevalency and success of it, by such improbable and unlikely means.

First, those who received the doctrine of Christ from the Apostles, had all the assurance of Christ's divine authority, that men can have of any thing from the testimony of credible eye and ear-witnesses. The Apostles who immediately conversed with our Saviour, and heard his doctrine, and saw his miracles, they had the testimony of their own senses for his divine authority; they heard and saw the attestations which God gave to him: And those to whom the Apostles preached, received all this from them, as from eye and ear-witnesses. So that those who received the doctrines of Christ from the Apostles, had all the arguments which the Apostles had, to satisfy them concerning Christ's divine authority, only they were not conveyed to them in so immediate a manner. The Apostles saw and heard those things themselves, which gave them satisfaction that Jesus Christ came from God: Those to whom the Apostles preached, received these things from their testimony.

And this also was a sufficient ground of assurance, as will clearly appear, if we can make out these two things:

I. That the Apostles were credible witnesses. And,

II. That if they were so, then their testimony was sufficient to persuade belief.

I. That the Apostles were credible witnesses. Of their knowledge there can be no question, because they gave testimony only of what themselves had seen and heard: So that if they falsified in any thing, it could not be for want of sufficient knowledge, but for want of fidelity. Now those who heard them, had all the arguments that could be to satisfy them of their fidelity. They delivered things plainly, and without artificial insinuations; they all agreed in their testimony, and were always constant to themselves in the same relation; there was no visible interest to move them in the least to falsify against their knowledge; they gained nothing by it; nay, so far were they from that, that they run themselves hereby up-

on the greateſt hazards and diſadvantages; and which is the higheſt evidence that this world can give of any man's ſincerity, they ventured their lives for this teſtimony, and ſealed it with their blood. For though martyrdom be no ſufficient argument of the truth of that for which a man lays down his life, yet it is a very good argument of a man's ſincerity; it ſignifies that a man is in earneſt, and believes himſelf; and if the thing be not true, yet that he thinks it to be ſo, otherwiſe he would not die for it: So that if we have no reaſon to doubt of the knowledge of thoſe witneſſes, (as certainly we have no reaſon, the things which they teſtified being plain matters, what they ſaw and heard, in which every man knows whether he ſpeaks true or not; I ſay, if we have no reaſon to doubt of their knowledge) we cannot queſtion their integrity and ſincerity, having the higheſt evidence of that, which this world can afford: For there cannot be a better argument of the integrity of witneſſes, than to lay down their lives for their teſtimony.

II. If the Apoſtles were credible witneſſes, then was their teſtimony ſufficient to perſuade belief. For what greater evidence can any man have of any thing which himſelf has not ſeen, than to receive it from credible eye-witneſſes, that is, from ſuch perſons as we have all the reaſon in the world to judge worthy of credit? This evidence men are contented to accept in other caſes, as ſufficient to induce belief, and if we will not accept it in matters of religion, we are very partial and unjuſt. We find that upon the evidence of credible witneſſes, men generally proceed with good aſſurance in human affairs; the chief temporal intereſts of men, of their eſtates and reputations and lives, are determined upon no better evidence than this. Now if in matters of religion we will reject that evidence which ſhall be ſufficient to ſway our aſſent in other things, it is a plain ſign that we have leſs mind to religion than to other things; that we have ſome intereſt or picque againſt it; otherwiſe we would not refuſe to yield an equal aſſent, where the evidence is equal.

The

This reason tells us; and our Saviour in effect says the same thing, when he chargeth those who rejected this evidence of credible witnesses with the sin of unbelief: Mark xvi. 14. *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.* But now if the testimony of credible witnesses be not a sufficient ground of faith, it could have been no sin in the disciples not to believe those who had seen Christ risen from the dead.

Secondly, Those who received the doctrine of Christ from the Apostles, had not only the testimony of credible witnesses, but they had this testimony confirmed by miracles. Because the Apostles were to go abroad to the world, and to preach to many who never saw or knew them before, and consequently had no reason at first to believe their testimony, till they were satisfied of the value of the witnesses; and this could require long time, and frequent conversation, so that the gospel must have made but a very slow progress at this rate: and because they were like to meet with great opposition from the powers and wits in the world, from the prejudices of education, and from the lusts and interests of men; therefore for the speedier and more effectual propagation of the gospel, God was pleased to confirm this testimony by miracles, to endue those who were to preach the gospel to the world, with miraculous powers and gifts, of speaking all languages, and healing diseases, and casting out devils; of foretelling things to come, and raising the dead; that being accompanied with these visible and sensible signs of the divine presence and power, their testimony might more easily be believed.

And that this was the end of those miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, the scripture frequently tells us.

Hence it is, that our Saviour forbad them to preach the gospel abroad, till they were furnished with this power, Luke xxiv. 49. *But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* And Acts i. 8, 9. our Saviour tells

the Apoſtles before his aſcenſion, *But ye ſhall receive power after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you; and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt parts of the earth.* This was that which qualifieth them to be witneſſes to Chriſt, and which gave confirmation to their teſtimony. So St. Mark tells us, Mark xvi. 20. *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with ſigns following.* To the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, chap. ii. 3, 4. ſpeaking of the publiſhing of the goſpel, *How ſhall we eſcape,* (ſays he) *if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?* What was the confirmation that was given to it? It follows in the next words, *God alſo bearing them witneſs both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.* The Apoſtles bare witneſs of Chriſt, and God bare witneſs to them, by thoſe miraculous powers and gifts, that their teſtimony was true.

Thirdly, Thoſe who received the doctrine of Chriſt from the Apoſtles, had yet a further evidence of the divinity of this doctrine, from the wonderful ſucceſs and prevalency of it by ſuch improbable and unlikely means. Had the doctrine of Chriſt's religion been ſuited to the corruptions of men, and ſtollen inſenſibly into the world, and prevailed by degrees in the revolution of many ages, as the heathen ſuperſtition and idolatry did, which met with no oppoſition from the luſts and intereſts of men it had then been no ſtrange thing: Or had it been planted by power and force of arms, as the religion of Mahomet was, then indeed the ſucceſs of it had been no argument that it was from God. Had it been ſet off with all imaginable advantages of wit and eloquence, as the philoſophy of the Heathen was; and had it been entertained by a ſet of more ſublime ſpirits, and thoſe who were more ſtudious and contemplative, and whoſe underſtandings were elevated above the common pitch, this might have

have been looked upon but as human and ordinary, and according to the common and usual course of things. But that a doctrine which was so opposite to the lusts and inclinations of men, which was persecuted and opposed by all the powers of the world, despised and contemned by the witty part of mankind; that a doctrine, the profession whereof did expose men to so many worldly inconveniencies, to so many dangers and sufferings, to derision and to death, should be planted by a few mean and inconsiderable men, destitute of all secular power, and advantages of human learning and eloquence; and in so short a time be so vastly propagated, and so generally entertained by all sorts of men, rich and poor, philosophers and illiterate; this was extraordinary, and can be attributed to nothing else but a divine power accompanying it, and bearing it up against the power and malice of men. That the doctrine of the gospel delivered to the world by mean persons, with so much simplicty and plainness, should so strangely affect the hearts of men, and be of so admirable a force to stir up and and inflame men to piety and virtue, seems to me a very plain argument of its divinity: For we do not find that any doctrine that was merely human, had ever any considerable power upon the minds of men where it was not set off with the arts of speech and charms of eloquence: and then it only produceth some present motions and heats; but seldom hath any lasting and permanent effect, such as the Christian religon hath had in the world.

Thus I have shewn what assurance those who received the doctrine of the gospel from the Apostles were cabable of having concerning the divinity of this doctrine, and the divine authority of the persons who declared it to the world.

Thirdly, I am to consider what assurance after-ages, down to this day, are capable of having concerning this matter; and this principally concerns us who live at the distance of so many ages from the first revelation of the gospel. Of this I shall give you an account in these two particulars:

First

First, We have an authentick and credible account of this doctrine, and of the confirmation which was in the first ages given to it, transmitted down to us.

Secondly, The effects of this doctrine still remain in the world.

First, We have a credible and authentick account of this doctrine, and of the confirmaion which in the first ages was given to it, transmitted down to us. I told you at first, that there are but these three ways whereby we can be assured of matters of fact:

1. By the immediate testimony of our own senses, if we ourselves be present when the thing is done or spoken, and see and hear it. Or,

2. By the testimony of credible eye or ear-witnesses of it. Or,

3. By a credible account or relation of it transmitted to us. And all these ways, in their kind, are accounted sufficent to give men an undoubted assurance of matters of fact. No man doubts of what he himself sees or hears: Men generally believe many things which they have not opportunity of seeing themselves, if they be attested to them by credidle eye-witnesses; and for things that were done long ago; and which no man now alive was a witness of, men are abundantly satisfied by a credible relation transmitted down to them. Upon this account men do firmly belive, that Alexander about two thousand years ago conquered a great part of the world; and that there was such a person as Julius Cæsar, who seventeen hundred years ago conquered England; and the like. Now if we have the doctrine and history of the gospel, and all the evidences of our Saviour's divine authority conveyed down to us in as credible a manner as any of these ancient matters of fact are, which mankind do most firmly believe, then we have sufficent ground to be assured of it.

Now there are but two ways imaginable, whereby the doctrine of Christ's religion, and the evidences of its divinity can be conveyed down to us, either by oral report and traditon, or by books and writing. The former of these the experience of the world hath shewn to be very uncertain, and in the suc-

succession of many ages liable to great changes and hazards. Hence it is that the prudence of mankind, and the necessity of human affairs, have introduced the latter way of conveying the memory of things to after-ages, namely by writing and records: and the good God likewise in his wise providence hath taken care, that those who were eye and ear-witnesses of our Saviour's doctrine and life, should commit to writing the history and relation of those matters, that so the memory of them might be preserved to all generations; and these books which we call *the holy scriptures*, are the authentick records of our religion, without which the Christian religion, in all probability, had long since either been strangely corrupted, or wholly lost out of the world. For that oral report would not have preserved it, there is this evidence, sufficient to convince any man, that is not obstinately resolved to the contrary, that of all the persons that formerly lived in the world, and the great actions that have been done, besides what are recorded in history, and of the innumerable miracles of our Saviour, which were not written in the books of the gospel: I say, of all these, oral tradition hath preserved nothing; so that if the doctrine of the Christian religion, and the history of the life and actions of our Saviour and the Apostles, had not been put into a surer way of conveyance than that of oral tradition, in all probability before this time there would have been left no certain monuments of them in the world,

And that we may understand how much these latter ages are indebted to the wisdom and goodness of God, that he hath furnished us with so fixt and certain a way of being acquainted with his will, with the doctrine and grounds of our religion, I might represent to you what advantages this standing revelation of the scripture hath above that way of oral tradition; yea, though the revelation of the gospel had been renewed every two or three ages. But this has been done in some former discourses. [*See serm.* cxxvii and cxviii.] I therefore proceed to the other ground of assurance,

assurance, which the ages after the Apostles are capable of having, *viz.*

Secondly, The effect of this doctrine still remains in the world. The Christian religion is still profest in several nations, and is entertained by a considerable part of the world: And allowing for the difference between the extraordinary assistance which at first accompanied the gospel, and was necessary for the planting of it, and the more human and ordinary ways whereby it is now propagated, it hath considerable effects upon the hearts and lives of men.

It might justly indeed be expected, considering the reasonableness of the Christian religion, and the great evidence we have of the truth and divinity of it, that it should have a greater force and power upon men, than it hath in most parts of Christendom; but we cannot reasonably expect in a prosperous state of Christianity, those extraordinary heats and fervours which the primitive Christians had whilst they were under continual persecution: We cannot reasonably expect that unity among Christians, and that they should be so generally and universally good, as they were under a state of persecution; for common sufferings have a strange force to unite men, and to endear them to one another: In times of persecution it might be expected that all or most of those who profess themselves Christians should be really so: When a profession is dangerous to those that make it, and attended with persecutions, then there will be but few pretenders to it; scarce any man will dissemble to the hazard of his life: But when any religion flourisheth, and is prosperous; when it is an odious thing, and against a man's interest not to profess it, then it may justly be feared that there will be great numbers of hypocrites, of those who in compliance with the fashion, and the prevailing interest, will take upon them the outward profession of it.

But however we see the same effects of Christianity still remain in the world: Christ is still owned as the true *Messias* and *the Son of God;* his doctrine acknowledged to be true, and to have been from God; so that thus far his promise hath been made good of

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building his church upon a rock, and that *the gates of hell should not prevail against it*. That Christianity hath uninteruptedly continued for above sixteen hundred years, is an additional evidence of the divinity of this doctrine, which the first ages of the world could not have: Only this is sadly to be bewailed, that this religion, which hath all imaginable confirmation given to the truth of it, should have no greater effect upon the lives of men; that when we have so much reason to assent to it, yet so few can be persuaded to practise it; that when we make so many solemn professions of our belief of the truth of it, yet by the actions of our lives, we should so visibly contradict the articles of our belief.

Thus I have gone through the first thing I proposed to be considered in my text, *viz.* The full and clear evidence which we have of the truth of the gospel, and particularly of the divine authority of that person who declared the Christian religion to the world. There are two other general heads which the text would lead us to consider, which I shall but briefly treat of, and so conclude this subject.

The *second* thing considerable in the words is, the cause of the infidelity of men, notwithstanding all the evidence which the gospel carries along with it; which the Apostle expresseth in these words, *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

In speaking to this I shall do these four things:

First, Shew why the infidelity of men is attributed to the the Devil, as the cause of it.

Secondly, Shew more particularly what influence the Devil hath upon the minds of men, to keep them in unbelief.

Thirdly, That this does not excuse the infidelity of men.

Fourthly, Shew the wickedness and unreasonableness of infidelity.

First,

First, Why the infidelity of men is attributed to the Devil, as the cause of it. There are two principles that bear sway in the world, and have a more immediate influence upon the mind of man; the Holy Spirit of God, and the Devil. The former of these is continually moving and inclining them to good: The latter swaying and tempting them to evil; and these two principles share mankind between them. Hence it is that in scripture, the Spirit of God is said to *dwell* in good men; and the wicked and vicious part of mankind (whom the scripture frequently calls the world) are said to be in the possession of the Devil, and to belong to his share and lot. Upon this account the Devil is called in the text *the god of this world*. Accordingly St. John frequently rangeth mankind under these two heads; those that belong to God, and those that belong to the Devil, 1 John iii. 9. *He that committeth sin is of the Devil: But he that committeth not sin, is born of God.* In the next verse he calleth them *the children of God, and the children of the Devil; In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil.* So likewise, chap. v. 19. *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* Or as the words may be rendered more suitably to the opposition which the Apostle aims at, *the whole world is subject to the wicked one; we are of God*, but the rest of the world is *subject to the Devil.*

Upon this account it is, that in the constant phrase of scripture, all good motions and inclinations, and all good graces and virtues are ascribed to the Spirit of God, as the author and worker of them: And all wicked and vicious inclinations, all the sins and vices of men are attributed to the Devil, as in some sort the author and worker of them: And because faith is the root of all other graces and virtues, as infidelity is of sin and wickedness, therefore faith is in a peculiar manner said to be the work of the Holy Ghost; and infidelity the work of the Devil. And as the spirit of God is said to *enlighten the understandings* of men, and *to open their hearts that they may believe:* So the Devil is said *to blind the minds*

of

them that believe not. As the Spirit of God is said *work in them that believe;* so the Devil is said *to work in the children of unbelief.* Eph. ii. 2. he is called *the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience,* ἀπειθείας, *of unbelief.* This is one of the principal designs which the Devil hath always carried on in the world, to bring men to unbelief, and to keep them in it. As it is the great work of the spirit of truth *to lead men into truth,* and bring them to the belief of it: so the great business of the Devil is to seduce men from the truth. Upon this account he is said, John viii. 44. to be a *murderer from the beginning, because he abode not in the truth;* which refers to the first temptation, whereby he ruined and destroyed our first parents, by seducing them to unbelief; *Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* And because he found this attempt so successful, he still pursues mankind with the same temptation of unbelief. This is for the *first;* why infidelity is attributed to the Devil, as the cause of it.

I come in the *second* place, to shew more particularly what influence the Devil hath upon the minds of men, to keep them in unbelief; how, and in what manner he *blinds the minds of them that believe not.* These two ways chiefly; by false principles, and by vicious and corrupt habits.

I. By false principles, which when they have once got possession of the understanding, like so many enemies they defend it, and hold out against the truth. By this means the Devil kept a great part of the Jews, and of the heathen world in unbelief: and their minds were so blinded by these false principles which they had entertained, that they could not see *the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.* As for the Jews, he had with a great deal of art conveyed false principles into them, whereby they were extremely prejudiced against Christ and his doctrine; so that when he, who was the *desire of all nations,* and whom the Jews had looked for, with so longing an expectation, was come, *they could see no beauty in him, wherefore he should be desired.* The Devil no doubt understood very well by the prophecies

of the Old Teſtament, that the Meſſias was to come, wh would give a terrible blow to his kingdom; and ther fore, to provide againſt this ſtorm which he fa coming upon him, he poſſeſt the Jews a great whi before with falſe apprehenſions of the Meſſias, that h was to be a great temporal Prince, and to deliver I rael from all their enemies, and to ſubdue all natio to them; and he plaid his game ſo well, that the mo learned among the Jews were generally poſſeſt with th apprehenſion, under the notion of a divine doctrin which had been brought down to them by traditic from Moſes and the Prophets: So that when the Me ſias came, and they ſaw nothing of the outward glo and ſplendor which they expected, they would n know him, but deſpiſed and rejected him as a counte feit and impoſtor.

As for the idolatrous gentiles, he had for many ag together blinded them with falſe notions of God an his worſhip, and with principles of a falſe philoſophy by which when they came to meaſure the doctrine Chriſt, the plain truths of the Chriſtian religion ſeeme fooliſh and ridiculous to them; and by theſe prejudi ces the Devil kept many of them, eſpecially of th Philoſophers, from believing the goſpel.

And proportionably in every age, ſuitably to th temper of it, he endeavours to poſſeſs men with fal principles, either to keep them in unbelief, or to driv them to it.

II. The ſecond way whereby the Devil *blinds th minds of them that believe not*, is by vicious an corrupt habits; which though they do not poſſeſs th underſtanding, yet they have a bad influence upo it; as fumes and vapours from the lower parts o the body affect the head. The vices and luſts of me darken the underſtanding, and fill the mind wit groſs and ſenſual apprehenſions of things, and ren der men unfit to diſcern thoſe truths that are of ſpiritual nature and tendency, and indiſpoſed t receive them. When mens *deeds are evil, they d not love the light*, leſt it ſhould *reprove* their vices, *an* *mak*

ake them manifest. Truth is offensive and grievous a corrupt mind, as the light of the sun is to sore es. A vicious man is not free to entertain those uths which would check and cross him in his way; e looks upon them as enemies, and therefore thinks mself concerned to oppose them. Every lust makes man partial in his judgment, and lays a false bias upon s understanding, which carries it off from truth, and akes it lean towards that side of the question which most agreeable to the interest of his lusts:

And by this means the Devil kept many, both of ie Jews and Gentiles, in unbelief; he had tempt-d them to those sins which did indispose them for ie receiving of that doctrine which enjoins *the deny-g of ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and chargeth ien so strictly with all manner of holiness and puri-. The Pharisees under a mask of religion, were uilty of great wickedness and impiety; and the Hea-ien were monstrously degenerated into all manner f vice. So that it was not only the false principles, ut likewise the vicious lives of men, which were op-osite to the doctrine of the gospel, and *blinded their inds, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ id not shine into them.*

And the Devil still makes use of this means to bring nen to infidelity, and keep them in it; as knowing hat the shortest way to atheism and infidelity, is to lebauch them in their lives. Therefore the Apostle eems to give this as the reason of the infidelity of some n his time, 2 Thess. ii. 12. *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness:* When men once take pleasure in wickedness, then infidelity becomes their interest; for they cannot otherwise defend and excuse a wicked life, but in denying the truth which opposeth it; that man only stands fair for the entertaining of truth, who is under the power of no lust, because he hath nothing to seduce him, and draw him aside in his enquiry after truth: he hath no interest but to find truth: he hath the indifference of a traveller, who is not inclined to one way more than another, but is only concerned to

know the right way. Such indifferency of mind e very good man hath; he is ready to receive truth when sufficient evidence is offered to him, because h is not concerned that the contrary proposition shoul be true. If a man be addicted to any lust, he is no likely to judge impartially of things: and therefore ou Saviour doth with great reason require this dispositio to qualify a man for the discerning of truth, John vii 17. *If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* He that is desirous to do the will of God, he is likely to judge indifferently concerning any doctrine that pretends to be from God; for if there be not good evidence for it, he hath no reason to deceive himself, by entertaining that as from God, which he hath no assurance that it is so; and if there be good evidence for it, he hath no reason to reject it: but if a man be enslaved to any vice or lust, he is not free to judge of those matters which touch upon his interest; but is under a great temptation to infidelity, because he must needs be unwilling to acknowledge the truth of that doctrine which lies so cross to his interest.

Thirdly, This does not excuse the infidelity of men, that the Devil is in some sort the cause of it; because he cannot blind our minds, unless we consent to it: He can only suggest false principles to us, but we may choose whether we will entertain them; he can only tempt us to be wicked, he cannot force us to be so whether we will or not: as we may resist the dictates, and quench the blessed motions and suggestions of God's Spirit, and too often do; so may we *resist the Devil*, and repel or *quench* those *fiery darts* which he casts into our minds, though we do not do it so often as we should. We cannot resist the motions of God's Spirit without injury to ourselves: But we may safely oppose the suggestions of the Devil; and we may do it with success, if we sincerely endeavour it. So God hath promised, that *if we resist the Devil, he shall flee from us*: But if we voluntarily consent to his temptations, and suffer ourselves

ves to be blinded by him, the fault is our own, as ell as his, and we are guilty of that infidelity which e suffer him to tempt us to. And this will appear, we consider,

Fourthly, The wickedness and unreasonableness of fidelity. The scripture every where gives it a bad aracter, calling it, *an evil heart of unbelief, to de-rt from the living God.* Not to believe those re-lations of God, which are sufficiently propounded us, is *an apostasy from the living God*, a kind of heism, and an argument of a very evil temper and sposition. And therefore St. John speaks of infi-lity, as the highest affront to God imaginable, and it were a giving God the lie, 1 John v. 10. *He at believeth not the record which God hath given of s Son*, is said to *make God a liar*.

The greatest and clearest testimonies that ever God ve to any person in the world, were to Jesus Christ, id yet how full of infidelity were the Jews to whom ose testimonies were given? They are the great tterns of infidelity, who resisted such immediate e-dence; and by the characters which the New Testa-ent gives us of them, we may judge of the evil and nreasonableness of infidelity: And if we consult the istory of the New Testament, we shall find infidelity escribed by such characters and properties, and ac-ompanied with such qualities, as shew it to be a very vil and unreasonable spirit. The principal of them re these:

1. Monstrous partiality in denying that which had reater evidence than other matters which they did elieve.

2. Unreasonable and groundless prejudice.

3. A childish kind of perverseness.

4. Obstinacy, and pertinacious persisting in error.

5. Want of patience to consider and examine what an be said for the truth.

6. Rudeness, and boisterous falling into uncivil erms.

7. Fury, and outrageous passion.

8. Infidelity is usually attended with bloody and nhuman persecution. But the treating on these par-

ticulars I reserve for another subject. [*See the following three sermons on* John iii. 19.]

The third and last thing contained in the text, is the dangerous state of those who having the gospel propounded to them, yet do not entertain and believe it; the Apostle tells us they are in a lost and perishing condition; *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*

I say, of those who have the gospel propounded to them. As for those to whom the gospel was never offered, they shall not be condemned for their unbelief of it: God will not punish them for not believing the revelation which was never propounded to them, but for sinning against *the law written in their hearts.* So the Apostle hath stated this matter, Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15. they that have a law revealed to them by God, shall *be judged by that law;* but they that are *without* such a *law*, shall be *judged without the law, by the law which is written in their hearts.* Those persons and nations in the world, to whom the gospel was not revealed, shall not be condemned for not believing it: but for sins committed by them against the light of nature, and the law which is written in every man's breast.

But those who have the gospel propounded to them, and yet continue in unbelief, their case is the most dangerous of any persons in the world, whether they be speculative or practical infidels.

1. For speculative infidels (of whom I have been principally speaking) we may guess how great their condemnation shall be, by the greatness of their sin, which I have endeavoured fully to describe to you with all its aggravations. It is called Heb. iii. 12. *An evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God,* ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ζῶντος. Infidelity is a kind of apostasy from God; it is said to be the giving God the lie, 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar;* and we cannot but think that God will severely punish those who put such affronts upon him: It is but e-

qual

ial that they who resist the clearest light, should *have eir portion in utter darkness.*

2. For the practical infidels, those who in words knowledge the gospel to be true, but in works deny ; their condition is every whit as bad as the others ; y, I had almost said, that it shall be more tolerable the day of judgment for the speculative infidel, than r them. He who denies the truth of the Christian ligion, and lives contrary to the precepts of it, he ts suitably to his principles ; but he that owns the ath of the gospel, and lives a wicked life, offers vio- nce to those principles which he hath entertained.

For if we profess ourselves Christians, by this pro- ssion we declare to the world, that we believe that e Son of God hath delivered that doctrine to the orld, which we call the gospel, and hath promised be *the author of eternal salvation to them that o- y him*, and hath threatened men with eternal misery case of disobedience ; and that we make not the ast doubt, but that both in his promises and threat- ings God will be as good as his word : But if in the idst of this profession, we live contrary to the holy ecepts of the gospel, in ungodliness and worldly lusts, profane swearing, by a trifling and irreverent use of e great and glorious name of God, in the neglect God, and of the duties of religion, in the profana- on of his day, in drunkenness and filthy lusts, in aud and oppression, in lying and perjury, in wrath id malice, in enmity and uncharitableness one toward nother ; this very thing, that we have made profession f the gospel, will be an aggravation of our con- emnation. Do we think, that at the day of judg- ent, we shall escape by pleading this for ourselves, nat we believed the gospel, and made profession of it ? o ! out of *our own mouths* we shall *be condemned ;* or it seems *we knew our master's will, and yet did it ot ;* we were convinced that we ought not to do such ings, and yet we did them ; we believed the glori- us promises of the gospel, and yet we neglected this reat salvation, as a thing not worthy the looking fter ; we were verily persuaded of the intolerable and endless

endless torments of hell, and yet we would leap into those flames.

Nothing can make more against us, than such an apology as this; our very excuse will be the highest accusation and charge that can be brought against us; and out of our own confession we shall be condemned.

All that now remains, is to make some application of this discourse which I have made to you concerning the truth of the Christian religion; which I should do in these two particulars:

First, To persuade us to a firm belief of the Christian religion. And,

Secondly, To live according to it. But as to this, I have prevented myself in some former discourses. [*See serm.* 224, *and* 228.]

SERMON CCXLIII.

The excellency and universality of the Christian revelation, with the sin and danger of rejecting it.

JOHN iii. 19.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The first sermon on this text.

AT the 16th verse of this chapter our Saviour declares to Nicodemus (who was already convinced by his miracles, that he was *a teacher come from God*) the great love and goodness of God to mankind in sending him into the world, to be the Saviour

viour of it, *God so loved the world, that he gave s only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, ould not perish, but have everlasting life.* Consi-ring the great wickedness of mankind, it might just-have been feared and expected, that God should ve sent his Son into the world upon a different er-nd, to have punished the wickedness of men, and to ve destroyed them from off the face of the earth; t he tells us at the 17th verse, that *God sent not r Son into the world to condemn the world, but that rough him the world might be saved;* and that the ly way to avoid this condemnation, and to obtain at salvation which God designed for us, is *to believe him whom God hath sent.* Ver. 18. *He that be-veth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth t, is condemned already, because he hath not be-ved in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* e is condemned by this very act of rejecting the Son God, because he rejects the only way whereby salva-n is to be had; and to aggravate the condemnation such persons, our Saviour here in the text repre-nts himself and his doctrine as a light come into the rld, on purpose to discover to us our sinful and mi-rable condition, and the way of our recovery out it, and salvation from it; and those that believe t on him, who do not entertain and welcome this ar and gracious discovery of God's love and good-ss to mankind, as doing the absurdest thing ima-nable, and making the most preposterous choice, referring darkness before light: *This is the condem-tion, that light is come into the world, and men ved darkness rather than light, because their deeds re evil.*

In which words there are these six things obser-le:

First, The description which is here given of our viour and his doctrine, they are called a light: *Light come;* that is, the Son of God preaching the doctrine life and salvation to men.

Secondly, The universal influence of this light; *ght is come into the world.* It is designed for il-

lumi-

lumination and instruction, not only of a particula place and nation, but of a whole world.

Thirdly, The excellency and advantages of th doctrine above any other doctrine or institution, eve that of the Jewish religion, which was likewise imme diately from God; they are all but darkness in con parison of it, *Light is come into the world, and me loved darkness rather than light.*

Fourthly, The absurdity and unreasonableness of re jecting the doctrine of the gospel; it is a preferrin darkness before light: *Men loved darkness rather tha light*; that is, they choose rather to continue in thei former ignorance, than to entertain this clear and mos perfect discovery of God's will to mankind.

Fifthly, The true reason and account of this absurd choice: *Men loved darkness rather than light, becaus their deeds were evil.*

Sixthly, The great guilt of those who reject the doctrine of the gospel; by this very act of theirs they are condemned, nay they condemn themselves, be cause they reject the only means of their salvation *This is the condemnation*, this very thing condemns and argues the height of their folly and guilt, that when light is come into the world, they preferred darkness before it. I shall discourse distinctly on these particulars.

First, We will consider the description which is here given of our Saviour and his doctrine, they are called light. *Light is come into the world.* Light is a metaphor frequently used in scripture for knowledge, especially for spiritual and divine knowledge; and those who teach and instruct others are said to be lights. So our Saviour is frequently called *the light of the world*, and *the true light*; and his disciples, who were to instruct the world, are called light, *ye are the light of the world*; and the doctrine of our Saviour is likewise called a light, *the light of the glorious gospel of Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. And it is with respect to his doctrine, that he is here said in the text to be *a light come into the world*: which phrase of *coming into the world*, does not so immediately re-

fer

r to his nativity, as to his commission from God; or this phrase of *coming into the world*, is of the same importance with that of being *sent from God*; as verse 7. where he says of himself, that *God sent him not into the world, to condemn the world;* and here in the text, *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world*, that is, that when God sent his Son on purpose to preach such a doctrine, men should reject it, and set it at nought: And in this sense, this phrase of *coming into the world*, is, I think, frequently used in the New Testament, for *coming in God's name, upon some message to the world.* So chap. vi. 14. some of the Jews being convinced of our Saviour's divine commission, express it thus; *of a truth this is that prophet which was to come into the world.* So chap. xi. 46. speaking of himself as sent of God, says he, *I am come a light into the world;* he had said just before, *he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me;* and then he adds, *I am a light come into the world.* There is one text indeed, where this phrase seems to be taken for being *born into the world*, chap. i. 9. *And that was the true light, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world:* But several of the Fathers, as St. Cyril and St. Augustin, read this text otherwise, and that with great probability, considering the use of this phrase every where else; I say, they read it thus: *This was the true light which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man;* that is, which was sent from God to enlighten all mankind: And so this phrase of *coming into the world*, refers not to men's being born into the world, but to our Saviour's being sent from God; and this our Saviour seems to distinguish from his birth, John xviii. 36. *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth*, meaning that he was not only born, but commissioned by God for this end.

But enough for the explication of this phrase, the proper importance whereof is not unworthy our knowledge; especially since a sect amongst us build their doctrine of a light within them, and born with them, suf-

sufficient to conduct every man to salvation, upon that text I mentioned before. *This was the true light which enlightens every man that comes into the world* for which there is no pretence, if we read it, as the original will very well bear it, *This was the true light which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.* And so our Saviour says of himself, chap. xii. 46. *I who am the light, am come into the world.*

But that which I principally intended under this head, is the unfolding of the metaphor, which runs through the text, that so we may come at the plain sense and meaning of it, namely, why our Saviour, or (which is all one) the doctrine which he preached to the world is represented to us by *light*. And here I might tell you, that the doctrine of the gospel is called *a light*, with regard to its chearing and reviving nature; for *light* (says Solomon) *is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to the eye to behold the sun:* so the gospel is *glad tidings of great joy*. In regard likewise of its purity; as light is the purest of all corporeal beings, so the doctrine of the gospel doth enjoin a greater holiness and purity than any other religion ever did. And (not to be tedious in slight things) in regard of its sudden communication and speedy propagation in the world. As light darts itself from east to west in a moment; so the gospel was propagated with incredible swiftness, and did in a very short space diffuse itself over the world. Thus I might tell you, that in these and many more such respects, the doctrine of the gospel is called *a light:* But I do not love to hunt down a metaphor; for I know very well, that the scripture (like other authors) useth a metaphor only to one purpose at one time; and though many more similitudes may by fancy be found out, it is certain, but one is intended; which I take notice of on purpose to reprove the vanity and injudiciousness of chasing metaphors farther than ever they were intended: For a metaphor is commonly used to represent to our minds the first and most obvious likeness of things. Thus the doctrine of the gospel is called *light*, in respect of the clearness

rneſs of its diſcovery, it being one of the chief and
t obvious properties of light, to diſcover and make
le itſelf, and other things. So the Apoſtle tells
Epheſ. v. 13. *But all things that are reproved, are*
le manifeſt by the light: And in this reſpect and no
:r, the doctrine of the goſpel is here called *a light;*
uſe it clearly diſcovers to the world thoſe things,
:h they were either wholly ignorant or uncertain of
re; and withal it carries its own evidence along
it, and hath plain characters of its own divinity
i it.

nd here I might ſhew at large theſe two things:
irſt, What diſcoveries the doctrine of the goſpel
made to the world.
econdly, What evidence it brings along with it of
wn divinity, that it is from God.
irſt, What diſcoveries the doctrine of the goſpel
made to the world. It hath more clearly diſco-
l,

The nature of God, which is the great founda-
of religion.

Our own ſinful and miſerable ſtate.

The way and means of our remedy and recovery
of it.

A more perfect and certain law and rule of life.

A more powerful aſſiſtance for the aid and en-
gement of our obedience.

And laſtly, The goſpel hath more clearly diſco-
l to us the eternal rewards and puniſhments of an-
world, which are the great arguments to obedi-
and a holy life. I ſhall go over theſe as briefly
an, having elſewhere * treated more largely on
of them.

In the doctrine of the goſpel we have a clear
very made to us of the nature of God; which
e great foundation of all religion. For ſuch as
notions and conceptions of God are, ſuch
heir religious worſhip and ſervices of him be:
worthy of him, and becoming his great and

* *See his Grace's ſermons publiſhed by himſelf, Vol.*
rm. 5.

glorious majesty; or vain and superstitious, answe
able to the idol of their own imagination; And su
will be the actions of their lives; for all men ma
their God their example, and esteem it an essent
piece of religon, to endeavour to be like him. No
the gospel gives us the most true and perfect ch
racter of the divine nature, most agreeable to re
son, and the wisest and best apprehensions of ma
kind, such a character as is apt to beget in us th
highest love and reverence towards him, and to e
gage us to the imitation of him, by the constant pr
ctice of holiness and virtue; representing him to
as most amiable for his goodness, and most drea
ful for his power and justice, describing him to
a pure spirit, which the Heathen did not general
believe; and consequently to be worshipped in su
a manner, as is most suitable to his spiritual natur
concerning which the Jews were infinitely mistake
For God did not command sacrifices to the Jew
and all those external and troublesome observanc
because they were most agreeable to his own n
ture: but because of the grossness of their apprehe
sions and the carnality and hardness of their hear
God did not prescribe this way of worship to the
because it was best; but because the temper of th
people, which was so very prone to idolatry, wou
admit of no other.

The gospel likewise discovers to us more clear
the goodness of God and his great love to ma
kind, one of the best and strongest motives in t
world to the love of God. The Heathen did ge
rally dread God, and look upon him as fierce a
revengeful, and therefore they studied by all me
to appease him, even by human sacrifices, and o
fering up their own children to him; and all alo
in the Old Testament, though there be plain and e
press declarations of the goodness of God, yet he is g
nerally described as very terrible and severe; but t
gospel is full of gracious declarations of Go
love and mercy to mankind. In the Old Te
ment he is usualy stiled *the Lord of Hosts, the gr
and terrible God;* but in the New Testament, he
pres

ents himself in a milder style, *the God of love and ce, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and in him *Father of mercies, and the God of all patience l consolation.* And this difference between the e of the Old and New Testament was so remark- e, that one of the greatest sects in the primitive rch (I mean that of the Gnosticks, which was sub- ded into many other sects) did upon this found their esy of two principles or gods; the one evil and ce and cruel, whom they called the God of the l Testament; the other kind and loving and merci- whom they called the God of the New.

2. The gospel hath likewise more clearly discover- to us our own sinful and wretched state; that be- made upright, and originally designed by God to in an holy and happy condition, and endued with icient power for that purpose, we by our wilful ıgression and disobedience of an easy law given to first parents, are sunk into a wretched state of ig- ance and weakness, of sin and sorrow, and thereby become estranged from God, and obnoxious to his ıth and displeasure, and utterly unable to help and over ourselves out of this sad and miserable state; d this is a great advantage to us, to understand the th of our condition, and the worst of our case; ause a just sense of it will prompt us to seek out a remedy, and make us ready to embrace it when s offered to us. And therefore in the

3. Place, the gospel hath plainly discovered to us : way and means of our recovery out of this wretch- condition: Namely, that in tender commiseration our miserable and helpless condition, God was pleas- to send *his Son*, his *only Son*, into the world, to ume our nature, and *to be made in all things like to us, sin only excepted*, to dwell among us, to con- rse with us, that he might instruct us in the way happiness, and lead us therein by the example of holy life; and that by his death he might be a pro- iation for our sins, and purchase the forgiveness of em, and obtain eternal redemption for us. So that

here is an adequate and perfect remedy discovered i
the gospel, every way answerable to the weakness an
impotency, the degeneracy and guilt of mankind, *Go*
having laid help upon one that is mighty and able t
save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him
He took our nature upon him, and became man, *tha*
he might bring us to God, and by restoring us to h
image and likeness, might repair those woful ruin
which sin had made in us; and to obtain the pardo
and forgiveness of our sins, *God spared not his ow*
Son, but freely gave him to death *for us all; and*
having raised him from the dead, hath sent him t
bless us, in turning us away every one from our ini-
quity. So that by this means the great doubts an
fears of mankind, concerning the way of appeasing th
offended justice of God, are removed and satisfied
The gospel having given us full assurance, not onl
that God is reconciled to us, and willing, after al
our offences and provocations, to become our friend;
but that he hath established the way and means of it;
so that *if any man sin, we have an Advocate wit*
the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is th
propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, bu
also for the sins of the whole world. And this is a
peculiar advantage of the Christian religion, to assur
us of the forgiveness of sins, of the manner how it
is procured, and the certain terms upon which it is
granted, which neither by the light of nature, nor by
any revelation from God, was clearly discovered be-
fore.

4. The gospel hath likewise revealed to us a more
certain and perfect law and rule of life. It hath fixed
our duty, and made it more plain and certain in all
the instances of it, than either the light of nature, or
the utmost improvement of that light by philosophy,
or than the Jewish religion had done before. It hath
cleared our duty in some instances, which the light of
nature had left doubtful, or which the subtile disputes
of men had made so. It hath heightened our duty in
several instances; and those things which had not the
clear force of law before, but were only the coun-
sels of wiser men; it hath turned into strict precepts,
and

d made them necessary parts of our duty. It com-
nds universal love and kindness, and good will among
:n, and perfect forgiveness of the greatest injuries
d offences, and inculcates these precepts more vehe-
ntly, and forbids all malice and revenge more strictly
d peremptorily, than any religion or philosophy had
ne before; as will fully appear to any one who will
t attentively read and consider our Saviour's sermon
on the mount.

I cannot now enlarge in giving a particular account
the excellent laws and precepts of our religion,
ating to God, our neighbour, and our selves; I
ll only say of them, that they all tend to the per-
tion of our nature, and the raising of it to the
ghest pitch of virtue and goodness that we are ca-
ble of in this life, and to qualify and dispose us for
: felicity of the next; that they every way conduce
the benefit and advantage of particular persons,
gly considered, and to the peace and welfare of hu-
n society; in a word, they all conspire in the
ory of God, and the comfort and happiness of
n: And no religon that ever was in the world,
r no philosophy, can shew such a system of mo-
precepts, in which, as there is nothing vain and
ilty, so neither is there any thing defective and
nting; so that St. James doth with great reason
ll it *a perfect law.*

5. The gospel doth also discover and offer to us
most powerful assistance for the aid and encourage-
ent of our obedience, abundant help and strength
enable us to the performance of all that which
od requires of us. It offers us wisdom to enlighten
ir dark minds, and to direct us in doubtful and
fficult cases, James i. 5. *If any of you lack wisdom,*
t him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,
id upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. Our
viour hath promised *to give his Holy Spirit to them*
at ask it, to help our weakness, and to raise our
urage, to strengthen us against the power and force
strong and violent temptations, and to assist us in
l our conflicts with our spiritual enemies, and to

comfort and support us in all our afflictions and sufferings.

And without this, all the other advantages which our religon affords us would signify little. For what would the knowledge of our sinful and miserable state avail us, without power to rescue ourselves out of it? What is the pardon of our sins past, without strength against them for the future? What would signify the most complete rule of life, and the most perfect pattern of holiness and virtue, without ability in some measure to observe it, and live up to it? Without this necessary aid and support we might despair of resisting the temptations, and mastering the difficulties of a Christian course, of subduing the power of bad inclinations, and breaking the force of vicious habits, and bearing up against the violence of extreme suffering and persecution for righteousness sake; without this gracious assistance we can do nothing of all this; and by the help of this, we may become, as St. Paul expresses it, *more than conquerors*.

6. And *lastly*, The gospel hath clearly discovered to us the eternal rewards and punishments of another world, which are the great incentives and arguments to obedience, and a patient and constant continuance in well-doing. The gospel (as the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us) is in this respect *a better covenant* than the law, *being established upon better promises*, and having the sanction of more severe and terrible threatenings. These great and powerful arguments to keep mankind within the bounds of their duty, which the wisest of the Heathen had some doubt of, and which were but very imperfectly revealed to the Jews, are clearly made manifest by the gospel. So the Apostle tells us, that *life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel; and that therein the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. And this gives the gospel a mighty power and influence over the minds of men. *Now God commands all men every where to repent*, and obey his laws; *because he hath appointed a day in which*

which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is a sensible demonstration to all mankind of another life after this, and consequently of a future judgment.

I might proceed to shew in the *second* place, That as the gospel is a light, in respect of its clear discovery of other things to us, so likewise of itself, and its own divine authority.

It is a holy and reasonable doctrine, suitable to the highest and best improved reason of mankind, and plainly tending to our perfection and happiness; both for the sublimity of its mysteries, and the simplicity and excellency of its precepts, every way worthy to have God for its Author, and most likely to proceed from him and from none else: In a word, it is a doctrine in all respects so excellent and perfect, that it is beyond the compass of human understanding to imagine any thing better; and impossible, that any religion, materially differing from this, should be so good. No religion that ever was, or which the wit of man can devise, can give us juster notions of God, a truer account of ourselves, better rules of a good life, and arguments more powerful to persuade us to goodness, than the Christian religion hath done. And the intrinsick goodness and excellency of any religion, goes half way in the proof of its divinity; to which, if God be pleased to add the external confirmation of plain and unquestionable miracles, it amounts to a full demonstration, and hath all the evidence that it is possible for any religion to have, that it is from God.

But this is a very large argument, which I have handled in some other discourses ‡. All therefore that I shall at present add, is an inference or two from what I have been discoursing upon this argument, suited to the solemnity of this season †.

I. We

‡ *See Serm.* 229, 230, 231. *and the proceeding sermons in this volume.*

† *Preached on Christmas-day.*

I. We should welcome this light which is come into the world, with all possible expressions of joy and thankfulness. The doctrine of the gospel is the most glorious light that ever shone upon the world, the best news that ever arrived to mankind. Light is a chearful thing; *The light of the eyes* (says Solomon) *rejoiceth the heart, and good news maketh the bones fat.* When the Angel brought the news of our Saviour's birth to the shepherds, with what joy does he relate it to them? Luke ii. 10, 11. *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.* And Matth. ii. 10. when the wise men saw the star, which pointed at the place of his birth, and conducted them to it, it is said, *they rejoiced with great joy.*

And whenever we commemorate the breaking in of this glorious light upon the world, (I mean the birth of our blessed Saviour, how should our hearts be filled with joy, and our mouths with praises! We should every one of us break out into that hymn of the blessed mother of our Lord, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: for he hath regarded me and all mankind in our low estate.* He was pleased to come down from heaven to save us from hell; and to become man, that he *might bring us to God;* and was contented to be miserable, that he might make us happy; and he did declare this mighty affection to us, when we were not only unworthy of his love, but even beneath the consideration and regard of his pity; for; *what is man, that God should be thus mindful of him? or the Son of man, that the Son of God should visit him?* that he should condescend to inhabit our nature, and to dwell among us? All mankind may with equal or greater reason say, as the centurion once did to him, *Lord, we are not worthy that thou shouldest come under our roof.* What means this amazing condescension that thou shouldst leave thy glory to be thus obscured, and come from God, to be *despised and rejected of men;* and quit the regions of bliss and happiness, to become *a man of sorrows,*

sorrows, and acquainted with grief! Was it for us that thou didst all this? Yea, for our sakes, who never had done any thing for thine, who may be ashamed to remember, that we were grievous sinners and bitter enemies to thee, when all this was done for us.

Thus we should celebrate the memory of this blessed season, and as often as the year returns, with great joy and thankfulness commemorate the great blessings which this day brought to the world, and say with David, *This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice therein.* Abraham and David saw this day but far off; and yet they rejoiced: how should we then be transported with joy to whom this day is come, and upon whom *the Sun of righteousness* is long since *risen, with healing* and salvation *under his wings!*

II. Let us walk in this light. This expression the scripture useth to signify what use we should make of the advantages and opportunities which by the glorious light of the gospel are afforded to us, John xii. 35. *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.* Ephes. v. 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk therefore as children of the light.* Rom. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *It is now high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

This counsel is proper for Christians at all times, who live under the light of the gospel: but more especially at this time, when we commemorate the coming of this light into the world. Nothing can be more unsuitable and contrary to it, than works of darkness, I mean sin and wickedness, and those abominable vices, which too many are apt to indulge themselves in at this time, more especially such as the Apostle names in the

the text just now mentioned, *rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, contention and quarrelling*. We should at this time more especially *put off* those vices, and *put on the Lord Jesus Christ;* that is, be clothed with all those graces and virtues, which in the precepts of his religion, and the example of his life, he hath recommended to us. This is the time when *the word was made flesh*, and put on our nature: and what return can be more proper for us at this season, than to *put on the Lord Jesus; and to make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Nay at this time we should retrench more than usual from our excess and superfluity, both because of the crying necessities of the poor, who are very numerous; and likewise for the relief of our distressed and persecuted brethren, who are fled to us for shelter from the barbarous rage of their persecutors. What we would have done for the honour of Christ at another time, let us now do for the relief of his members; and whatever kindness we shew to them, he will take it as done to himself. We have great cause to be chearful at this time, and we may testify our joy by feasting, or any other lawful expressions of it; but we must not so feast, as to *forget the affliction of Joseph*, and not *to remember that we also are in the body*, and liable to the same sufferings. We must therefore take heed, that *our table* do not become *a snare to us;* and that our mirth do not degenerate into sensualityand sin.

Every Christian hath so many arguments against sin, that we should abstain from it at all times: but of all other times we should be most ashamed to be guilty of any lewdness and wickedness, when we are remembering *the appearance of the Son of God, to bring salvation to us*, and *to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*

To conclude, let us by all that hath been said be persuaded so to celebrate the memory of Christ's first coming to *take away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, that we may with comfort and joy *wait for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and*

and our Saviour Jesus Christ, when *he shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation.*

SERMON CCXLIV.

The excellency and universality of the Christian revelation, with the sin and danger of rejecting it.

JOHN iii. 19.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The second sermon on this text.

IN discoursing on these words, I have already considered the *first* thing observable in them, *viz.* The description which is here given of our Saviour and his doctrine; they are called *a light. Light is come;* that is, the Son of God bringing the doctrine and knowledge of salvation to the world; it being one of the first and most obvious properties of *light,* to discover, and make visible itself and other things. That which makes all things manifest, *is light;* and accordingly I have observed, that the Christian religion hath made a clear discovery to us of many great and important things, of which the world was either ignorant or doubtful before: And likewise that it brought great evidence along with it of its own divinity, and that it was from God.

I proceed now to the *second* thing observable in the text, *viz.* The universal influence of this light. *Light is come into the world.* The doctrine of the gospel was designed for the illumination and instruction,

ction, not of one particular place and nation, but of the whole world. Thus our Saviour and his doctrine are described by old Simeon, Luke ii. 30, 31, 32. *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* To the Gentiles, who were before in darkness, he is said to be a *light:* But to the Jews, who had the light of divine revelation in some degree before, he is said to be a *glory*, that is, a brighter and more glorious light; *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* And John i. 9. he is called *the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, that is, which was sent into the world for the illumination of all mankind. And John viii. 12. he says of himself, *I am the light of the world.*

Now that the revelation of the gospel by Jesus Christ was designed for the whole world, for the instruction, and comfort, and benefit of all mankind, I shall endeavour to make out by these three steps:

I. In that it is very credible, that God would some time or other make such a revelation of his will, as might be sufficient to direct and bring mankind to happiness.

II. That before the revelation of the gospel by Jesus Christ, no such general and universal declaration of God's will had been made to the world.

III. That the revelation of the gospel hath all the marks and characters of an universal revelation, and was certainly by God designed for that purpose.

I. It is very credible, that God would some time or other, when his infinite wisdom and goodness should think it most fit and seasonable, make such a revelation of his will to the world, as might be sufficient to direct and bring mankind to happiness. The consideration of the divine goodness, is very apt to induce such a persuasion; for what more reasonable to believe concerning God, than that he who

) is *good to all*, and the common Father of all man-
d, not *the God of the Jews* only, but the *God of*
Gentiles also, (as St. Paul argues to this purpose,
his epistle to the Romans) should some time or o-
, in pity and compassion of the ignorant and dege-
te and helpless condition of mankind, provide some
ersal remedy, by such a general revelation of his
, as was every way fitted and calculated to be of
ersal use and benefit to direct all men in the way
appiness, and if they be not wanting to themselves
ring them to it? that in the doubtings and uncer-
ies of mankind concerning the will of God, and
ule of their duty, he should give an universal law,
lly obliging all men, to be a perfect and standing
and measure of their duty in all times and places,
which should never stand in need of any addition,
dment, or alteration?

or why should we think that God, who is so e-
y related to us all, should confine the effects of
oodness to a few persons, or a small part of man-
, to one particular family or nation? That he
e bounty is so equal and unconfined in the dif-
g of temporal blessings, should be so partial and
w in the bestowing of his greatest and best gifts,
spiritual blessings which concern our souls, and
happiness to all eternity? How can we in reason
ne, that he who *causeth the sun to rise, and his*
to fall upon the whole world, should vouchsafe
great and most glorious light of his divine and
nly truth only to a few, and shower down his
ual blessings upon a small part of the earth, leav-
ll the rest of the world, a wilderness and a land
arkness? Thus to think of God, is no ways
able to those large apprehensions which mankind
always had of the goodness of God, by no
s honourable to the divine nature; and there-
it is most highly probable, that God should one
or other make such a revelation of his will to
ind, as is of universal concernment and advan-

II. I shall shew that before the revelation of th gospel by Jesus Christ, no such general and universa declaration of God's will hath been made to the world All the revelations which God had made to men be fore, were either made to some particular persons upo particular occasions; or to one particular nation an people, I mean that of the Jews. Those which wer made to particular persons were so narrow and limited and of so private concernment, that they signified no thing to the generality of mankind; nor could th knowledge of them, with any degree of evidence have been propagated. As for that revelation which was made to the Jews, it was both in its nature an design, and in all the circumstances of it, plainly li mited to one particular place and nation. And as Go discovered no intention, so neither were there any pro per means and endeavours used to proclaim and prop gate it, as an universal law and institution obligato to all mankind.

From the nature and all the circumstances of th Jewish law, it clearly appears to have been designe for a municipal law and constitution, for the governin of one particular people and nation, within a cert territory and spot of ground, to which, a great pa of the precepts of it are peculiarly limited, and co be exercised and practised no where else; and not in tended to take in and oblige all the nations of th earth. For when this law was first given, God plai ly directs it to the people of Israel, beginning it in th form of words, *Hear, O Israel, The Lord thy God one God;* and, *I am the Lord thy God, who brou thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house bondage;* and he frequently tells them, *that he h separated them from all the people upon the face the earth, to be a peculiar people to himself;* to governed by peculiar civil laws, and by a particu way of religious worship; for which reason the Ap stle calls the Jewish law and religion, *a wall of part tion,* which did separate and divide them from all o ther people; so that even towards the strangers th lived among them, they were not bound in seve

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es to observe the same laws towards them which y were obliged strictly to observe towards their bre- en, as in the case of usury, and remitting debts, l releasing of servants.

Besides that, a great part of their religion was con- d to a particular place, which God should appoint, l which at last by his appointment was fixed to the ple at Jerusalem, to which they were obliged to ort thrice every year; which it was impossible for er nations to do. Not to mention that the great mises and threatnings of that law, were of plenty prosperity, or of famine and affliction in that d. To all which we may add, that a great part he laws and ordinances of that religion were pecu- ly fitted and suited to the genius and inclination of t people, and made in condescension to their capa- es and prejudices, to the obstinacy and hardness of ir hearts.

t is very clear likewise, that God did not design to ad and propagate this law any farther than that ple; since no means were appointed by him, no eavours were used to that end; no Apostles and phets were sent forth to proclaim and publish this to other nations; nay, the providence of God ns rather purposely to have designed to conceal n and their law, till the time drew near of God's ealing to the world a more perfect institution, which uld have its rise and beginning there, and from nce be published over the world, according to that he Prophet, that *the law should come out of Sion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;* but the which was given by Moses to the Jews, was for ny ages in a great measure concealed from the rest the world. So the Psalmist tells us, Psal. cxlvii. 20. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob; his sta- es and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt with any nation; and as for his judgments, they e not known them.* Nay, on the contrary, God l provided by several strict and severe laws, that the ple of Israel should have as little commerce and versation as was possible with other nations; a

plain sign he never intended their religion to be propagated among them: but this is so manifest from the nature of the Jewish religion, and all the circumstances of its constitution, that I need not labour any farther in the proof of it. I proceed therefore to shew, in the

III. and last place, That the revelation of the gospel hath all the marks and characters of an universal revelation, and was certainly designed by God for that end. And this will clearly appear, by considering these four things:

1. The person by whom God was pleased to make this revelation to the world.

2. The nature and design of it.

3. The prophecies and predictions concerning it. And,

4. The remarkable countenance and assistance which was given from heaven to the first publishers of it.

1. If we consider the person by whom God was pleased to make this revelation to the world, we cannot think that God had any less design therein, than the recovery and reformation of mankind. Now the person employed by God to make this revelation of his will, was the eternal and only begotten Son of God, assuming our nature, and appearing in it; I say, the eternal and only begotten Son of God. So the Apostle to the Hebrews describes him, and thereby distinguisheth him from all the former Prophets, by whom in former ages God had made particular revelations of himself to men, Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. *God who at sundry times,* (or *by several parts and degrees*) *and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets; hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power.* What a character is here of the greatest and most glorious person that ever was employed of God to men! A messenger of God to men: And who so fit as *the Son of God,* who came from

om *the bosom of his Father*, to reveal his will to all ankind? Who so proper as he, who made the orld, and upholds and preserves it, to be sent upon so eat an errand, as the recovery and salvation of the hole world? and on the contrary, who so unfit, as is great and glorious person, to be employed in ny less and lower design, than that which was of geeral concernment to the benefit and happiness of all ankind? So great an Ambassador was not fit to be nt to treat of any thing less than an universal peace, id the reconciliation of the whole world.

And then if we consider him, as assuming human ature, and thereby equally related to all mankind, it as fit he should be concerned for that whole race of eatures to whom he had so nearly allied himself, and hose nature he had vouchsafed to assume. It beme him, who became man, to shew himself a lover mankind, to reveal the will of God, and the way happiness, to all men, to be an universal teacher and w-giver; that by the direction of his doctrine, and e obedience of his laws, *all men might come to the owledge of the truth, and be saved.*

2. If we consider the nature of this revelation, it ill appear to be designed for the general use and befit of mankind. The matters revealed, whether ncerning God or ourselves, this world or the oer, are of universal concernment. The laws of is religion are not calculated for any particular ace or nation; one more than another; and the guments and encouragements to the obedience of ese laws, are equally fitted to work upon all caacities and conditions, and apt to affect them alike, cause they equally touch the interests and conrnments of all men: For since all men are equal the immortal duration of their souls, and equal obnoxious to the judgment of God in another orld, it concerns all men alike to understand their uty, and the way to gain the favour of God, and thereby to escape the endless and intolerable miseries, and obtain the unspeakable and everlasting happiness of nother world: and to direct, and excite men here, the whole revelation of the gospel, all the do-

ctrines, and all the laws of it, do plainly tend. There is nothing in the Christian religion, but what is fit for all men to know and practise, in order to their present peace and comfort, and their future and eternal happiness; and these things surely are of universal and equal concernment to mankind.

3. The predictions and prophecies concerning the Messias, and the doctrine which should be delivered to the world, do plainly shew, that this revelation should be universal. In the first promise to Abraham, it is plainly foretold, that *in his seed*, that is, as the Jews always understood it, in *the Messias*, *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*. And there are innumerable predictions in the Prophets of the Old Testament to this purpose. I shall mention but a few of many, Psal. ii. 8. *Ask of me*, (saith God to his Son) *and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*. Psal. lxxii. 17. speaking of the Messias, *Men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed*, Isa xlix. 6. *I will give thee* (says God there concerning him) *for a light to the Gentiles; that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth*.

4. And lastly, This revelation was actually published to the world, God giving remarkable countenance and assistance from heaven to the first preachers and publishers of it.

The Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, in virtue of his commission, and by his express command just before his ascension, went furth and published his doctrine to the world. Having upon the day of Pentecost, according to his promise which he made to them before his death, and renewed to them after his resurrection, when he was going to his Father, I say, having according to his express promise, received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, they began to publish the gospel first to the Jews; and being rejected by the greatest part of them, they preached it to the Gentiles; and as a confirmation of the doctrine which they preached, they witnessed the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as the great evidence of the truth of his doctrine; and to give

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nfirmation to this testimony, God enabled them to ork miracles, and particularly to raise the dead to e, which was a confirmation of their testimony, be-nd all exception: and in order to the more speedy id effectual propagation of this doctrine, God was easëd to work a strange miracle never wrought upon ny occasion before or since; he endowed the Apostles id first preachers of Christianity with a power of eaking all languages, which they had occasion in eir travels to make use of, without ever having stu-ed or learned them; and this miraculous gift was mmon to all the Apostles, and continued till the spel was published by them in most parts of the then own world; greater evidence than which God can-t be imagined to give of his design to communicate e knowledge of this doctrine universally, and to all na-ons: and if it was rejected in some places, and the ogress of it obstructed in others; this doth not hin-er but that God designed it to be universally known, id that it is in its own nature fit to be a law to all ankind; and God, who in his secret council hath t thought fit as yet to grant the knowledge of this octrine of salvation to some parts of the world, may his due time send this light into those *dark places of e earth, which are full of the habitations of barbarous-ss and cruelty*, and grant the knowledge of salvati-n to them. In the mean time, what cause have we bless God, to whom this light came so soon, and ho have enjoyed it so long! *Let us walk in the light hile we have it; lest darkness overtake us.*

And thus much may suffice to have spoken of e second particular which I observed in the text, amely, the universal influence of this light; *light is me into the world.*

I proceed to speak briefly to the third particular I entioned, *viz.* the excellency and advantages of is doctrine of the Christian religion, above any o-er doctrine or institution, even that of the Jewish eligion, which was likewise immediately from God. They are all but darkness in comparison of it. *Light r come into the world.* But in this I have in a great measure

measure prevented myself, in what I have already discoursed upon the two former heads, and therefore I shall say the less upon it: for by what I have already said, it will in a good measure appear how obscure and imperfect the discoveries both of natural light, and of the Jewish religion were, in comparison of the clear and bright revelation of the gospel; and that both concerning the nature of God, and the worship which is most suitable and acceptable to him; and likewise concerning the rule of our duty, and the rewards and punishments of another life, which are the great motives and arguments to obedience; and which, as to the greatest part of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, had but a very weak and faint influence before. And how could it well be otherwise, since the apprehensions of mankind concerning these things were dark and doubtful?

What gross and imperfect notions the Heathen had concerning God, we may judge by their universal and abominable idolatry. How uncertain their morality was (which yet was much the best part of Heathenism) we may see by their endless differences and disputes concerning moral duties. How wavering they were concerning the immortality of souls, and the rewards of another world, we may judge by the different and contrary opinions of the greatest Philosophers about these points. So that Heathenism was plainly defective, both in the knowledge of God, which is the great foundation of all religion; and the precepts of a good life, which are the rule of it; and the assurance of immortality, which is the great motive to religion, and the only solid comfort and support of the mind of man under the evils and afflictions of life, and against the fears of death.

And the Jewish religion likewise, though it had manifold advantages of Paganism, yet was it very short and imperfect in many of these respects which I have mentioned; besides that it gave no clear and well grounded assurance of the pardon and forgiveness of sins; and the rewards of another world were very obscurely revealed under that dispensation.

So

o that well might the Apostle, upon comparison of the aw and the gospel, say, *The law made nothing perect: but the bringing in of a better hope did.*

And as for the evidence which those religions had, 'aganism pretended to no other authority for their dolatrous worship, but the long custom and practice f the world. This Symmachus the Heathen insists pon, instead of all other arguments, *Sequimur majoes nostros, qui feliciter secuti sunt suos: We follow ur forefathers, who happily followed theirs.*

The Jewish religion indeed produced good evidence hat it was from God: but it is very destitute of argunents to prove, that it was either an universal, or erfect, or final revelation of God's will to mankind; ay, it was expressly said in their law, that *God would aise up another Prophet among them, to whom they vere to hearken, and to be obedient in all things.* The Messias was plainly foretold, and spoken of both n the Law and the Prophets, as one that was to be he author of a more perfect law and institution, which n due time was to be revealed to the whole world, *to e a light to lighten the Gentiles* as well as to be *the lory of the people of Israel:* and accordingly, *in the ulness of time* he came, and by a greater confirmation f miracles, than the Jewish religion had, he put a peiod to that weak and imperfect institution: and to new the law of Moses was at an end, God hath now or above 1600 years *taken away their place and naion*, destroyed their temple, and laid waste their country, and dispersed them over the world; so that they re not capable of observing a great part of their religion. By all which it appears, that whatever was in he world before, was but darkness, in comparison of he glorious light of the gospel; so that well might our Evangelist say, *This light was the true light, which oming into the world, enlightens every man: The rue light* by way of excellency and eminency, as our Saviour calls himself, *The true bread which came down rom heaven;* so the doctrine of the gospel is called *he true light*, in opposition to those *false* or *imperfect ights* which were in the world before. This doctrine

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of the Christian religion is a perfect, and therefore a final discovery of the will of God to man; because it can receive no amendment, therefore it shall never have any change or alteration.

I will conclude this particular with that inference which the Apostle to the Hebrews makes, from the consideration of the perfection and unchangeableness of the gospel dispensation, which he calls *a kingdom which cannot be shaken*, Heb. xii. 28, 29. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.* The better and more perfect, and more unchangeable our religion is, the better we should be; the more stedfastly should we persist in the sincere profession and practice of it: and if we do not, the heavier will be our condemnation; *For our God is a consuming fire.* I proceed to the

Fourth Particular observable in the text, *viz.* The great unreasonableness of rejecting this doctrine of the gospel. It is to make the absurdest judgment and choice that is possible; to prefer darkness before light. *Men loved darkness rather than light;* that is, they chose rather to continue in their former ignorance, than to entertain the most clear and perfect discovery of God's will to mankind. And what can be more absurd and unreasonable, when the difference is so palpable, and the choice so plain? That man is blind that cannot distinguish *light* from *darkness;* and he is very perverse and obstinate, who seeing the differenee between them, will *choose darkness rather than light.* Such was the unreasonableness of those who rejected the gospel when it was revealed to the world: since nothing is more clear to an impartial and considerate man, than that the Christian religion is the best and most perfect institution, of the greatest and most universal concernment to mankind, that ever was revealed to men; and our blessed Saviour, who was the author and founder of this religion, gave greater evidence that he came from God, than any other Prophet or Teacher that ever was; and the worship of God which this religion prescribes,

prescribes, is most agreeable to his nature, being a spiritual and a reasonable service, fit for men to give and for God to accept. In a word, the precepts of the gospel are more excellent in themselves, and better calculated for the happiness and perfection of human nature; and the motives and arguments to persuade men to the obedience of these precepts, more powerful than those of any other religion that ever yet appeared in the world.

So that the difference between the Christian religion, and all others that have been received and profest in the world, is so plain and apparent, that nothing but passion, or prejudice, or interest, or some other faulty principle, can hinder any man from yielding his assent to Christianity. The comparison is almost equal to that betwixt *light* and *darkness*; and therefore our Saviour had great reason to speak so severely of the infidelity of the Jews, who rejected such a doctrine, propounded to them with so much evidence and advantage. And because the Jews are the great scripture pattern of perverse infidelity and opposition to the truth, it will not be amiss to take our estimate and measure of the unreasonableness of this spirit and temper, from the properties and characters which we find of it in the Jews, most of which do still inseparably accompany the spirit of infidelity wherever it is, that as face answers face in water, so does the infidelity of this present age resemble that of the Jews in our Saviour's time, in all these perverse and unreasonable qualities which did then attend it; and therefore I shall take notice of some of the chief of them, as I find them dispersed up and down in the history of the New Testament.

But this, and what remains to be said upon this argument, I must reserve for another discourse.

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SERMON CCXLV.

The excellency and universality of the Christian revelation, with the sin and danger of rejecting it.

JOHN iii. 19.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The third sermon on this text.

WHEN I began to discourse on these words, I observed in them several particulars. As,

First, The description which is here given of our Saviour and his doctrine, by the metaphor of *light*. *Light is come.*

Secondly, The universal influence of this light, *Light is come into the world.*

Thirdly, The excellency and advantages of the doctrine of the gospel, above any other doctrine or institution, even that of the Jewish religion, which was likewise immediately from God. They are all but darkness, in comparison with this, *Light is come into the world; and men loved darkness.*

These *three* I have dispatched, and have entered upon the *fourth* particular observable in my text, *viz.*

The great unreasonableness of rejecting this doctrine of the gospel. It is to make the absurdest judgment and choice that is possible, to prefer *darkness* before *light*. *Men loved darkness rather than light.* The difference between the Christian religion and all others is so very plain, that our Saviour had great reason

eaſon to ſpeak thus ſeverely of the infidelity of the ews. And becauſe the Jews are the great ſcripture attern of perverſe infidelity, I propoſed the taking an ſtimate of the unreaſonableneſs of this ſpirit and tem- er, from the characters which we find of it in that eople, moſt of which do ſtill inſeparably attend the pirit of infidelity, wherever it is. I ſhall therefore ake notice of ſome of the chief of thoſe characters, as find them diſperſed up and down in the hiſtory of the ew Teſtament, and they are theſe which follow:

I. Monſtrous partiality, in denying and rejecting at revelation, which had not only as great but reater evidence, than other things which they did elieve, and were ready enough to entertain. They *lieved Moſes and the Prophets;* and the great con- mation which was given to them, was by the mi- cles which God wrought by them. Thoſe miracles ey did not ſee themſelves; but received them from e teſtimony of their forefathers, being brought down them by a very credible and uncontrouled revelati- , which they had no reaſon to doubt of the truth of; t they themſelves ſaw the miracles which our Saviour rought, which were more and greater than the miracles Moſes and all the Prophets, ſo that they were eye- tneſſes of that divine power which accompanied our viour; and yet they rejected him and his doctrine; y, ſo unequally did they deal with him, that after ey rejected him, notwithſtanding all the evidence ich he gave, that he *came from God*, they greedily ceived and ran after falſe prophets, who gave no ch teſtimony. So our Saviour foretells concerning em, John v. 43. and ſo afterwards it came to paſs, *am come*, (ſaith he) *in my Father's name*, (that is) ve given ſufficient evidence that he ſent me, and *received me not; if another ſhall come in his n name, him will ye receive. In his own name;* at is, without any miracles to prove that he comes m God.

And to ſhew their horrible partiality yet more, af- they had refuſed the cleareſt teſtimony that God

could give of him, they were contented to accept
the disagreeing testimony of two witnesses against hi
and upon that uncertain evidence to put him to dea

And this hath been the temper of those that opp
the truth in all ages, and in all kind of matters. Th
the church of Rome will needs understand those wo
of our Saviour, *This is my body*, in the sense of transu
stantiation, contrary to the plain intention of them, a
in contradiction to the reason and senses of all mankin
and yet they will not understand the plain institution
the sacrament in both kinds. And thus the Atheists, w
will not believe that there is a God, which made
world, can yet swallow things ten times harder to
believed; as that either the world was eternal of
self, or the matter of it; and that the parts of t
matter being in perpetual motion, did after infinite
als and attempts at last happen to settle in this order
which we now are; that is, that this admirable fra
of the world, which hath all the characters upon
of deep wisdom and contrivance, was made merely
chance, and without direction or design of any inte
gent author; so partial is infidelity, as to assent
the most absurd things, rather than believe the revela
ons of God, or to own those principles which are na
rally imprinted upon the minds of men, and have
general consent of mankind.

II. Another usual concomitant of infidelity is
reasonable and groundless prejudice. The Jews we
strangely prejudiced against our Saviour, and th
upon the weakest and slightest ground, as that
original was known among them, John vii. 27. *Ho*
beit we know this man whence he is: But wh
Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Sur
they were very ready to take exceptions against hi
that would urge this for an objection; for what
his original were known, might he not be from G
for all that? Moses was a great Prophet, and
it was very well known from whence he was: a
t was no where said in the Old Testament that
original should be unknown; nay, on the contra

was plainly declared, that he was to be of the tribe Judah, of the lineage of David, and to come out Bethlehem.

Another prejudice againſt him was, the meanneſs his parents, and of the manner of his education. Matth. xiii. 54. *Whence hath this man this wiſdom, nd theſe mighty works? is not this the carpenter's on? Is not his mother called Mary? And his bre- ren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? and is Siſters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath is man all theſe things? And they were offended in im.* And ſo likewiſe, John vii. 15. *How knoweth his man letters, having never learned?* A ſtrange nd of unreaſonable prejudice! They could not be- eve him to be an extraordinary perſon, becauſe his rents and relations, his birth and manner of breed- g were ſo mean, becauſe he had been brought up to trade, and not bred up like one of their Scribes nd Rabbies; as if God could not inſpire a man with all oſe gifts, which men ordinarily acquire by ſtudy and ains; and as if it had not been reaſonable to expect, at the Meſſias, who they believed was to be the great- t Prophet that ever was, ſhould be thus inſpired. ow in all reaſon the argument is ſtrong the other way, at ſure he was an extraordinary Prophet, who all of ſudden gave ſuch evidence of his great knowledge and iſdom, and did ſuch mighty works; becauſe this ould not be imputed to his breeding and education, nce that was ſo mean, and therefore there muſt be mething extraordinary and divine in it; thus another an who had been free from prejudice, would have een apt to reaſon.

Another unreaſonable prejudice was grounded up- n a ſpiteful and malicious proverb, concerning the ountry where our Saviour was brought up, namely, Galilee, John i. 46. *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* And John vii. 41. *Shall Chriſt*, (that is he Meſſias) *come out of Galilee?* and ver. 52. *Search nd look; for out of Galilee ariſeth no Prophet.* Na- hanael indeed, who was a ſincere good man, was eaſily rought off from this prejudice, and was contented to

be convinced of the contrary by plain evidence, when Philip desired him *to come and see*, John i. 47. But the Jews it seems laid great weight upon it, as if this one thing had been enough to confute all our Saviour's miracles, and after they had shot this bolt at him, the matter had been clearly concluded against him.

But wise and unprejudiced men do not use to be swayed and carried away with ill-natured proverbs; nor do they believe the bad characters which are given of a country, to be universally true without exception, as if every country did not yield some brave spirits, and excellent persons, whatever the general temper and disposition of the inhabitants may be observed to be: or as if a man could not be an inspired Prophet, unless he were bred in a good air; nor be sent by God, unless men approved the place from whence he came. The Bœotians among the Greeks were a heavy and dull people, even to a proverb; and yet Pindar a great Poet and wit, was born in that country. The Scythians were so barbarous, that one would have thought surely no good could come thence; and yet they yielded Anacharsis, none of the meanest of the Philosophers. The Idumeans were *aliens and strangers from the common-wealth of Israel;* and yet Job, one of the most excellent persons that ever lived, was born among them. God can bring forth eminent instruments out of any place and nation he pleases, *out of stones raise up children unto Abraham.* Our conceits are no rule to him, nor does he govern the world by our foolish proverbs; *His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.*

And thus some in our days have endeavoured to slur the reformation, by calling it the *northern heresy;* as if the light of truth were at as great a distance from these northern parts, as that of the sun, and nothing but error and heresy could come thence; which is just such a conceit, and grounded upon as wise a reason as that of the Donatists, who would needs have truth and the catholick church confined to Afric, because that was the southern part of the world,

world, and because it is said in the Song of Solomon, concerning the church, *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.*

Another mighty prejudice against our Saviour we find mentioned, John vii. 48. *Have any of the Rulers or Pharisees believed on him?* For this there seems to be some better colour than for the other; because the example of superiors and of persons thought to be more knowing, is considerable indeed in a doubtful case, and a good rule of action when we have no better: but ought to be of no force to sway our judgment against clear and convincing evidence. Zedekiah and the Princes of Judah would not hearken to Jeremiah: Yet was he a true Prophet for all that, though it was not their pleasure to think so. Sometimes there is a gross and palpable corruption in those who ought to be guides to others, and they have a visible interest in opposing and rejecting the truth. And this was the case of the Pharisees and Rulers among the Jews, in our Saviour's time. Any one that had known them, and judged impartially concerning them, would rather have chosen to have followed any example than theirs. Religion may sometimes be in the greatest danger, from those who ought to understand it best, and to be the greatest supports of it. So it was of old among the Jews, when the Prophet complains that *their leaders had caused them to err:* And so it hath been among Christians, in the great degeneracy of the Roman church; their Popes and their general councils, as they call them, have been the great corrupters of Christianity, and seducers of Christendom; which made Luther to say, with truth and sharpness enough, *Religio nunquam magis periclitatur quam inter reverendissimos;* "Religion is never in greater danger, than among the most reverend;" meaning the Pope and the Cardinals: When those who ought to teach and reform others, are guilty of the greatest errors and corruptions themselves.

I will mention but one prejudice more, which we find, John ix. 16. *This man* (say the Jews concern-

ing our Saviour) *is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day.* This indeed had been a considerable exception, if it had been true; and therefore our Saviour takes great care to vindicate himself from this aspersion: He shews that the law of the sabbath did not oblige in all cases, and that being a positive precept, it ought to give place to moral duties, which are of perpetual obligation, and therefore he bids them *go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice;* and the plain meaning of that saying was, that when positive institutions interfere with any moral duty, they cease to oblige in that case; that the sabbath was designed for the ease and benefit of men, and not for their grievance and burden; and therefore where the life of man is concerned, the law of the sabbath ceaseth; as in case of necessity, *David did eat of the shew bread, and was blameless,* though by a positive law it was forbidden for any man to eat of it, but the *Priests only.* Lastly, from a general practice in a common case among themselves, it being allowed by their own law, *to take an ox or an ass out of a pit on the sabbath-day;* and therefore much more to heal on the sabbath-day; and *to loose a daughter of Abraham, that had been bound eighteen years,* as our Saviour invincibly argues.

Upon the like prejudice several churches and communions in the world will not allow others to be good Christians, and in a state of salvation, because they do not lay the same weighi that they do upon positive institutions, not of divine, but of mere ecclesiastical authority, in which they are more unreasonable than the Jews. [*Of this see more,* Ser. 117, 118, 119.] But I proceed to a

III. Concomitant of their infidelity, and this was a childish kind of perverseness. Being strongly prejudiced against our Saviour, they were so peevish and froward, that nothing would satisfy them. And of this he himself gives us a remarkable instance, Matth. xi. 16, 17. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, we have*

e piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we e mourned nnto you, and ye have not lamented. ıe buſineſs was this, the Jews found fault with ın the Baptiſt, becauſe his habit and converſation s ſo rough and ſevere; and yet our Saviour could : pleaſe them neither, who was of a quite different nper. *John the Baptiſt came in the way of righ- uſneſs; and they received him not;* his way was ry ſtrict and ſevere, he came neither *eating nor inking*, was very ſtrict in his diet and manner of ing, of a coarſe carriage and melancholy temper; *d they ſaid he had a Devil.* He was to be a eacher of repentance, and his garb was ſuitable to s employment. Our Saviour was of a more eaſy d familiar, and converſable temper, ſuitable to a eacher of pardon and forgiveneſs; *the Son of Man me eating and drinking; and they ſaid, Behold a ine-bibber and a glutton, a friend of publicans and ners.* Now what could be more childiſh and per- rſe than to be pleaſed with nothing? By this plainly appeared, that whatever garb he had put ı, whatever his carriage had been, they would have und fault with it, and have made ſome exception gainſt it; at this rate it was impoſſible for him to cape the cenſure of men ſo perverſely diſpoſed; nd therefore our Saviour fitly compares them to ıildren playing in the markets, who were neither leaſed with mourning nor dancing.

And this is the humour of infidelity, and of thoſe ho oppoſe the truth, to cavil and make exceptiı- ns at every thing, and to argue againſt religion, nd the principles of it, from contrary topicks, and rguments that are inconſiſtent wth one another.

There are other inſtances of this perverſeneſs in he Jews; as that when they believed Moſes, and had . mighty veneration for him, yet they would not elieve him when he teſtified concerning the Meſſi- s. So likewiſe they looked upon John the Baptiſt s a Prophet; but yet would give no credit to his eſtimony concerning Chriſt. Nay, ſo froward were hey, that when our Saviour had wrought the great- ſt and plaineſt miracle that could be, in feeding

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5000 persons with five loaves, and two little fishes yet as if this had been nothing, they still call upon him to work a miracle, John vi. 30. *What sign workest thou, that we may see and believe?*

IV. Another usual concomitant of infidelity is obstinacy, and pertinacious persisting in error. This likewise was the temper of the Jews, not to be convinced by any evidence that could be offered to them. When our Saviour had several times put them to silence, so that they were not able to answer him, yet they obstinately persisted in their former conceit, and stiffly held the conclusion, though they were not able to make good the premisses, Matth. xxii. Our Saviour confuted the Sadducees about the resurrection, and put them to silence; and then undertook the Pharisees, and they could not answer him neither; both of them continued in their opinion, though each of them thought the other to be clearly baffled and confuted.

This obstinacy of theirs our Saviour makes a great aggravation of their infidelity, Matth. xxi. 31, 32. *Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*

Nay, which was the most unreasonable of all, when they could not answer his arguments, nor deny the miracles which he wrought, yet they were resolved not to believe on him, nor to suffer others to confess him, John xi. 47. 48. After he had wrought that great miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead, after he had lain four days in the grave, they were so far from owning themselves convinced by it, that hereupon *they took counsel to put him to death.* So the text tells us, that *many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did,* namely the raising of Lazarus, *believed on him. But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.* And now

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ıe would have thought that either they ſhould not ıve acknowledged this mighty miracle, or if they had, at they ſhould have been convinced by it, that he ıs from God: but the miracle was ſo notorious, that ey could not deny it; and they were ſo obſtinately t againſt him, that they would not be convinced by ; they granted the premiſſes, and yet denied the conuſion, ver. 47. *Then gathered the chief prieſts and hariſees a council, and ſaid, What do we? for this an doth many miracles; if we let him thus alone, 'l men will believe on him.* And it follows, ver. 53. *hen from that day forth, they took counſel together put him to death.*

And after he was riſen from the dead, and thoſe at bear witneſs to his reſurrection had their teſtimo- confirmed by miracles, yet the Jews continued in e ſame obſtinacy, as if they were reſolved to oppoſe e goſpel in deſpite of all evidence that could be ought for it. So we find Acts iv. 15, 16. that when e Rulers and Scribes beheld the man whom the Aoſtles had healed, ſtanding by them, it is ſaid, *they uld ſay nothing againſt it. But when they had comanded them to go aſide out of the council, they conrred among themſelves, ſaying, What ſhall we do theſe men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath en done by them, is manifeſt to all them that dwell Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it: but that it read no farther among the people, let us ſtraitly reaten them, that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in is name.* What could be more unreaſonable, than own the miracle, and yet to reject the teſtimony?

V. Another quality which accompanied this ſpirit infidelity and oppoſition to the truth in the Jews, as want of patience to conſider and examine what ıuld be ſaid for the truth; a haſtineſs to pronounce ıd paſs ſentence, before they had heard what could : ſaid for it. Thus the Phariſees, when they ſaw ır Saviour caſt out Devils, they preſently, without ıy farther conſideration, pronounce, that he did it *the Prince of Devils*, Matth. xii. 44. Had they ɔt been headily carried on by paſſion and prejudice, they

they would never have past this rash sentence. Had they but had patience to have considered matters, they could not have believed, that the Devil was confederate with Christ against himself, and the interest of his own kingdom.

And as it was then, so it is at this day; many continue in unbelief and error, not because there is not evidence enough for the things proposed to their belief, but because they have not patience enough to consider what may be said for them. Nay, in the church of Rome, that they may retain their people in their communion, they strictly forbid all examination of their religion, or so much as to hear or read what can be said against it; because this is doubting, and doubting is next to infidelity, a mortal sin, and a temptation of the Devil. There is but one season and nick of time, wherein they will allow any of the people to examine and enquire into matters of religion, and that is when they would gain a man to their religion, and they allow it then only because they cannot help it. Some reasons they must offer to persuade men to be of their church; and when they offer them, they must allow them to consider them, and judge of the force of them, though they had much rather they would take their words for the strength and goodness of them; for they do what they can to hinder them from advising with those that will dispute the matter with them: Or if they cannot prevent examination, yet they divert them as much as they can from any particular enquiry into their doctrines and practices; this they pretend is a tedious and endless course, and therefore they commonly direct them to a shorter way, which is not to enquire first into the truth of their doctrines, and the goodness of their worship and practice; but first to find out the true church, and then learn of her what doctrines and practices are truly Christian; and by this means they get their religion swallowed whole, without any particular examination of their doctrines and practices, which will not bear the trial; and therefore to make the work short, they take it for granted, that there is always a visible catholick church; that this church is infallible in all matters

atters of faith; and that the Roman church is this vi-
ole infallible catholick church, because no other church
etends to be so; as indeed there is no reason why a-
particular church should pretend to be catholick or
iversal, or to speak plainer, why a part should pre-
nd to be the whole: and all this being admitted, there
nothing more now to be done, but to receive all the
octrines which this church teacheth, without any fur-
ier examination of them, because this church being
pposed to be infallible, all that she says must be true,
ough it appears to be never so contrary to scripture,
reason, or sense. But now in this way of proceed-
g, there are two or three things which seem to be
ry odd:

1. That men must take their religion in a lump, and
ot be allowed to examine the particular doctrines and
actices of it: which is to say, they have an excellent
ligion, but men must by no means examine it, nor
ok into it. This looks so suspiciously, that a wise
an, for this very reason, if there were no other, would
ject it, because they are so afraid to bring it to the
ial.

2. It seems likewise very strange, that when they go
make proselytes, they should take so many things
hich are in question and controversy between us, for
anted; as that the church in every age is infallible,
d that the church of Rome is the infallible and ca-
olick church. They meet indeed sometimes with
me easy and willing converts, that will meet them
us far, that is, more than half way: but what if a
an will not take all this for granted, but will put them
the proof of it? Why then he is not so civil as they
oped and expected; and commonly they give over
mpting him, or at least depart from him for a season,
ll they can find him in a more pliable temper; for it
a long work, and requires a great deal of time to
rove some things, especially to the dull capacity of a
orthern heretick: besides that some things are stub-
orn, and will not be proved, though never so much
ains be taken to do it; and so are the propositions now
entioned, towards the proof whereof I never saw a-

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ny argument offered that is within distance, or indee within sight of the conclusion. And then,

3. It seems a very strange method of coming t know what the true doctrines of Christianity are, b first knowing which is the true church: for it is no the church which makes the doctrines of Christianit to be true, but the profession of the true Christian do ctrine which makes the church; and therefore we mu first know which are the true doctrines of Christianity the profession whereof makes the true church, befor we can possibly know which is the true church; bu which are the true doctrines of Christianity is not t be known but by a particular examination of them, an comparing them with the rule of the Christian faith *the word of God.* But they that have a mind to de lude men, and keep them in error, must never admi their religion to be tried by this rule. But to proceed,

VI. Another quality which accompanies infidelity and opposition to the truth, is rudeness and boisterousness, falling into uncivil terms and reproachful names. Such was the carriage of the Jews towards our Saviour; when they were not able to reason with him, they fell to railing at him, John viii. 48. When he argued against their infidelity in the calmest manner, and by the strongest and clearest arguments endeavoured to convince them of the unreasonableness of it: *Which of you,* saith he, *convinceth me of sin? And if I speak the truth, why do you not believe? He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil?* They presently call him heretick; for so the Jews esteemed the Samaritans.

VII. Another quality near a-kin to this, is fury and outrageous passion, John vii. 23. The Jews were in a great passion against our Saviour, for *healing on the sabbath-day.* When the Apostles wrought miracles, it is said, that *the High-priest and they that were with him were filled with indignation.* And when St. Stephen preached to them, it is said, *They gnashed on him with their teeth.* And St. Paul acknow-

vledgeth of himself, while he opposed the truth hristianity, he was *mad against all that were of way.*

III. And *lastly*, to mention no more, infidelity oppositon to the truth is usually attended with dy and inhuman persecution, a certain argument weak cause, and which wants better means of iction. Thus the Jews treated our Saviour; when could not deal with him by reason, they perse- d him, and *sought to kill him*, John v. 16. and . viii. 59. When our Saviour had answered all objections, and they had nothing to reply upon *They took up stones to cast at him*; a sign their ns were spent, and that their arguments were at nd. Thus infidelity and error betrays its own neſs and wanting of reason on its side, by making f such brutish and unreasonable weapons in its own ice. Our blessed Saviour and his Apostles never ght of propagating their religion by these inhuman barbarous ways. These methods are proper to *destroyer;* but not to the *Lamb of God*, and *Saviour en. The Son of man came not to destroy mens , but to save them;* to do good to the bodies and e souls of men; and not to destroy their bodies, not in order to the saving of their souls. All the is that he or his Apostles used, were teaching and ading, and that with great meekness: *Learn of for I am meek*, saith our Lord: and the Apostles y where command the teachers of this religion, *to all gentleness to all men*, and *in meekness to uct those that oppose themselves, if God peradven- will give them repentance to the acknowledgment e truth.* They did not go about to convert men rmed force, and ways of violence and cruelty. It sign that reason runs very low with that religion, h had no better arguments to persuade men to it dragoons and the gallies; these are *carnal*, and efore not *Christian weapons.* So St. Paul tells *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal;* and hey were *mighty through God to subdue* a great part e world to the belief and obedience of the Chri-

stian religion. Thus I have done with the fourth p ticular in the text, the unreasonableness of infidelit and opposition to the truth. The two remaining on I shall dispatch in a few words.

Fifthly, Therefore, I observed the true reason a account of mens opposition to the truth, and rejecti of it; *Men loved darkness rather than light, becau their deeds were evil.* And indeed *darkness* is mo suitable to a wicked and vicious life, because the d formity of it is not so easily discovered as in the *ligh* this makes the evil of mens actions more manifest, a their faults more inexcusable. Men may pretend oth reasons for their infidelity and opposition of the trut and may seem to argue against the principles of religi in good earnest, and against the reasonableness a truth of Christianity, from a real contrary persuasion but no man that hath these things fairly proposed h him, and with all the advantages they are capable o and hath the patience to consider the true nature a design of the Christian doctrine, but must acknowled it, not only to be the most reasonable, but the mo divine, most likely to come from God, and to mak men like to God, of any religion that ever yet appea ed in the world. If any man reject it, it is not b cause he hath good and sufficient reasons against it but because he is swayed by some unreasonable prej dice and passion, or biassed by some lust or inter which he is strongly addicted to, and loth to part wit and yet he must part with it, if he entertain this re gion, and submit himself to the terms and rules of i This is that which commonly lies at the bottom of in fidelity, and is the true reason of their opposition t the truth, that *their deeds are evil.* And it is natur for every man to defend himself, and justify his doin as well as he can; and if religion be clearly again him, to set himself with all the despite and malice h can against religion; and to hate, and with all his migh to oppose that which contradicts that course which h is in love with, and is resolved to continue in: for a our Saviour reasons in a like case, *No man can serv two masters; but either he will hate the one, and lo*

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ther; or he will cleave to the one and quit the
. Men cannot entertain the truth, and retain
luſts; and therefore, as our Saviour tells us im-
ately after the text, *Every one that doth evil,*
th the light, neither cometh he to the light, leſt his
ſhould be reproved. The light of truth is as
ous to a bad man, as the light of the ſun is to ſore
; becauſe it lays open and diſcovers the faults and
of men, and if they entertain it, will urge them,
put them upon a neceſſity of reforming their wicked
, and becauſe they have no mind to this, therefore
reſiſt the light and endeavour to keep it out.
vices and luſts of men are ſo many diſeaſes; and
naturally loath phyſick, and put it off as long as
can: and this makes many inconſiderate and wilful
to favour their diſeaſe, and take part with it againſt
ounſel and advice; and when the great Phyſician
uls comes and offers them a remedy, they ſlight
reject him, and will rather periſh than follow his
riptions.

nd this was the true reaſon why the Jews rejected
goſpel: they were vicious in their lives, and loth
ndergo the ſeverity of a cure; they were not will-
o be ſaved by ſo ſharp and unpleaſant a remedy.
this is ſtill the true reaſon at this day of mens
ty and oppoſition to religion, becauſe it declares
inſt their evil deeds, and proclaims open war againſt
: vices and luſts which they love, and are reſolved
ve in; ſo that they have no other way to juſtify
ſelves and their actions, but by condemning and
ling that which reproves and finds fault with them.

nd here I might ſhew more particularly, that there
wo accounts to be given why bad men are ſo apt to
and reject divine truth, even when it is revealed
propoſed to them in the faireſt manner, and with
cleareſt evidence.

. Becauſe their minds are not ſo rightly prepared
diſpoſed for their receiving of divine truth. And,
. Becauſe they have an intereſt againſt it, their
gns and *deeds are evil*, they have ſome worldly
reſt to carry on, or they are in love with ſome vice

or lust which they cannot reconcile with the truths
God and religion. But this I have done at large el
where. [*See Serm.* 87, 88, 89.] I proceed therefo
to the

Sixth and last particular in the text, namely, t
great guilt of those who reject the doctrine of the g
spel. By this very act of theirs they are condemn
nay, they condemn themselves; because they reject t
only means of their salvation. *This is the condemn
tion*, this very thing argues the height of their fo
and guilt, that *when light is come*, they prefer *dar
ness* before it. If any thing will condemn men, th
will; and if any thing will aggravate their condemn
tion, and make it above measure heavy and intolerab
this will. If it were in a doubtful matter that men ma
so ill and foolish a choice, the thing would admit
some excuse: but the dispute is between *light and dar
ness*. If the Christian religion had not so plainly t
advantage of any other institution that ever was;
that holiness which the gospel commands, and th
happiness which it promiseth, were not infinitely to
preferred before the ways of sin and death, the unb
liever and the disobedient might have something
say for themselves; but the case is plainly otherwis
so that whoever having the Christian religion fair
and fully proposed to him, doth not believe it, or pr
fessing to believe it, doth not live according to i
hath no cloak for his sin; neither the one for his in
delity, nor the other for his disobedience: and if an
thing will aggravate the condemnation of men, th
will; for the greater light men sin against, the greate
is their guilt; and the greater any man's guilt is, th
heavier will be his doom. The Heathen world th
lived for many ages *in darkness and the shadow o
death*, shall be condemned for sinning against that in
perfect knowledge of their duty, which they had fro
the glimmering of natural light; but they shall b
beaten with few stripes, their punishment shall be ge
tle in comparison: but what punishment can be sever
enough for those obstinate infidels that reject th
light, and prefer *darkness* before it; for those impu
den

t offenders, who admit the light of the gospel, l yet rebel against it; who do the works of dark- s in the midst of this light, at noon-day, and in face of the sun? This consideration the scripture quently urgeth upon those who enjoy the light of gospel. *I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah*, the y worst and wickedest of the Heathen, *than for* . *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great sal- ion?* If either we *reject the knowledge of the truth*, *sin wilfully after we have received it*, that is, a- tatise either to infidelity, or impiety of life, *there ains no more sacrifice for sin, nothing but a fear- looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, to ume the adversary*, that is, such implacable enemies God and his truth; in so doing, we resist and re- our last remedy; and after God hath sent and sa- ced his only Son for our salvation, we cannot eason think *there remains any more sacrifice for* I have gone over the several particulars in the : I shall only make two or three inferences.

irst, If the great design of the Son of God was nlighten the world with the knowledge of divine h, what shall we think of those who make it their t endeavour to stifle and suppress this light, and inder the free communication of it? who conceal word of life from the people, and lock up the know- e of salvation, contained in the holy scriptures, in nknown tongue?

econdly, Having represented the unreasonableness nfidelity, and the evil concomitants of it in the , *Let us take heed lest there be in any of us an heart of unbelief, in departing from the living* and *lest any of us fall after the same example ifidelity*. Let us not reject the principles of reli- , because they are inconsistent with our evil practi- but let us rather endeavour to reconcile our lives e rules of religion, and resolve to reform those s which religion reproves, and which the reason ur own minds, if we would attend to it, re- es as much as religion; a clear evidence that

we are in the wrong, and religion in the right, because hath the best and sobereſt reason of mankind on i side.

Let us then with all readiness of mind entertai that light which God hath afforded to us, to conduc us and shew us the way to happiness, whether by th the principles of natural religion, or by the revelatio of the gospel in its primitive purity and lustre, an not as it hath been muffled and disguised by the ig norance and superstition which prevailed in after ag es, till the light of the reformation sprang out, an restored a new day to us, and *called us again out darkness into a marvellous light*, which by the blessin of God we have now enjoyed for many years, an which we cannot go about to quench, without incu ring the condemnation in the text.

Thirdly, and lastly, Let us take heed of practic infidelity, of opposing and contradicting the Christi religion by our wicked lives and actions. Thoug we profess to believe the gospel, yet if our *deeds evil*, we do in effect and by interpretation reject i and *love darkness rather than light*; though we a sent to the truth of it, yet we *with-hold it in unrigh teousness*, we resist the virtue and efficacy of it, an do oppose and blaspheme it by our lives; nay, we d as much as in us lies to make others atheists, by e posing religion to the contempt and scorn of such pe sons, by opening their mouths against it; as eith not containing the laws of a good life, or as destitu of power and efficacy to persuade men to the obed ence of those laws. Where, will they say, is th excellent religion, so much boasted of? How does appear? Look into the lives of Christians, and the you will best see the admirable effects of this doctrine the mighty force of this institution! And what a sham ful reproach is this to us! What a scandal and di paragement to our holy religion, to see some of th worst of men wearing the badge and livery of the be religion and institution that ever was in the world!

I conclude all with the words of the Apostle, Ph lip. i. 27. *Only let your conversation be as it b*

come

meth the gospel of Christ; and *stand fast in one spi-t, with one mind, striving together for the faith of e gospel.*

SERMON CCXLVI.

The ground of bad mens enmity to the truth.

JOHN iii. 20.

or every one that doth evil, hateth the light, nei-ther cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved.

AMong all the advantages which God hath afforded mankind, to conduct them to eternal happiness, the light of the Christian religion is incomparably the greatest; which makes it the greater wonder, that at its first appearing in the world, it should meet with such unkind entertainment, and so fierce and violent an opposition. Of all the blessings of nature, light is the most welcome and pleasant; and surely to the mind of man, rightly disposed, truth is as agreeable and delightful, as it is to the eye to behold the sun: and yet we find, that when the most glorious light that ever the world saw, visited mankind, and Truth itself was incarnate, and came down from heaven to dwell among us, it was so far from being welcomed by the world, that it was treated with all imaginable rudeness, and was opposed by the Jews, with as much fierceness and rage, as if an enemy had invaded their country, with a design *to take away their place and nation.* No sooner did the Son of God appear, and begin *to send forth his light and truth* among them, by the publick preaching of his doctrine, but the teachers and rulers among the Jews rose up against

gainſt him as a common enemy, and were never quiet till they had taken him out of the way, and by this means, as they thought, quite extinguiſhed that light.

Now what can we imagine ſhould be the reaſon of all this, that a perſon who gave ſuch clear evidence that he came from God, that a doctrine which carries ſuch clear evidence of its divine original, ſhould be rejected with ſo much indignation and ſcorn? That light and truth, which are ſo agreeable to mankind and ſo univerſally welcome, ſhould be ſo diſdainfully repulſed? what account can be given of it, but that which our Saviour here gives in the text? *Light is come into the world, but men loved darkneſs rather than light; becauſe their deeds were evil. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved,* (or *diſcovered;* for ſo the word likewiſe ſignifies, and may very fitly be ſo rendered in this place) *but* (as it follows) *he that doth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God;* that is, that they are of a divine ſtamp and original. In which words our Saviour repreſents to us the different diſpoſition and carriage of good and bad men, as to the receiving or rejecting of truth, when it is offered to them: They that are wicked and worldly are enemies to truth, becauſe they have deſigns contrary to it. *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.* And on the contrary, a good man, *he that doth the truth,* and ſincerely practiſes what he knows, *cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt.*

I ſhall not need to handle theſe diſtinctly, becauſe in ſpeaking to one, the contrary will ſufficiently appear. That therefore which I ſhall ſpeak to at this time, ſhall be the former of theſe, *viz.* The enmity of bad men, and of thoſe who carry on ill deſigns to the truth, together with the cauſes and reaſons of it. *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be diſcovered.* Here our Saviour's doctrine (as I have ſhewn

ſhewn in the three laſt diſcourſes) is repreſented to us by the metaphor of light, becauſe it was ſo clear a revelation of the will of God, and our duty; and carried in it ſo much evidence of its divinity; it being the chief property of light to diſcover itſelf, and other things: ſo that thoſe great and important truths contained in our Saviour's doctrine, are the light here ſpoken of, and which men of bad deſigns and practices are ſaid to hate and decline; *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.*

In which words two things offer themſelves to our conſideration:

Firſt, The enmity of wicked men to the truth: *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light.*

Secondly, The ground or reaſon of this enmity: *Leſt his deeds ſhould be diſcovered.*

Firſt, The enmity of wicked men to the truth: *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light.* Men of ill deſigns and practices hate the light, and becauſe they hate it they ſhun it, and flee from it, *neither cometh he to the light.* Now this enmity to truth appears principally in theſe two things, in their reſiſtance, and in their perſecution of it:

1. In their oppoſition and reſiſtance of it. A bad man is not only averſe from the entertainment of it, and loth to admit it, but thinks himſelf concerned to reſiſt it. Thus the Jews oppoſed thoſe divine truths which our Saviour declared to them, they did not only refuſe to receive them, but they ſet themſelves to confute them, and by all means to blaſt the credit of them, and to charge them not only with novelty and impoſture, but with a ſeditious deſign, and with blaſphemous and odious conſequences; they perverted every thing he ſaid to a bad ſenſe, and put malicious conſtructions upon all he did, though never ſo blameleſs and innocent. When he inſtructed the people, they ſaid he was ſtirring them up to ſedition; when he told them he was the Son of God, they made him a blaſphemer for ſaying ſo; when he healed on the Sabbath-day, they charged him with

pre-

profaneneſs; when he confirmed his doctrine by miracles, the greateſt and plaineſt that ever were wrought, they reported him a Magician; when they could find no fault with many parts of his doctrine, which was ſo holy and excellent that malice itſelf was not able to miſrepreſent it, or take any exception to it, they endeavoured to deſtroy the credit of it, by raiſing ſcandals upon him for his life; becauſe his converſation was free and familiar, they taxed him *for a wine-bibber and a glutton;* and becauſe he accompanied with bad men, in order to the reclaiming and reforming of them, they repreſented him as a favourer of ſuch perſons, *a friend of publicans and ſinners.*

By theſe and ſuch like calumnies they endeavoured to diſparage his doctrine, and to alienate men from it; being prejudiced againſt the truth themſelves, they did what they could to keep others from embracing it; and as our Saviour tells us, *ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men, neither going in themſelves, nor ſuffering others that were going in, to enter.*

2. The enmity of bad men to the truth likewiſe appears in their perſecution of it, not only in thoſe that propound it to them, but in all thoſe that give entertainment to it: and this is the higheſt expreſſion of enmity that can be, to be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than the deſtruction and extirpation of what we hate. And thus the Jews declared their enmity to the goſpel. When this great light came into the world, they not only ſhut their eyes againſt it, but endeavoured to extinguiſh it, by perſecuting the author of this doctrine, and all thoſe that publiſhed it, and made profeſſion of it; they perſecuted our Saviour all his life, and were continually contriving miſchief againſt him, ſeeking to intrap him in his words, and ſo render him obnoxious to the Roman government, and at laſt putting him to death upon a falſe and forged accuſation, and all this out of enmity to that truth which he delivered to them from God; as he himſelf tells us, John viii. 40. *But now*

ye

seek to kill me, a man which hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.

But their malice did not reſt here, they perſecuted in like manner his diſciples and followers, *caſting them out of their ſynagogues, and forbidding them to ſpeak to the people in the name of Jeſus, delivering them up to councils, and condemning them to death.* Never did good men ſhew greater zeal and earneſtneſs for the truth, than theſe wicked men did againſt it; ſo that had our bleſſed Saviour been the greateſt impoſtor that ever was, and brought the moſt pernicious doctrine that ever was into the world, they could not have perſecuted him with more rage and fury, and given greater teſtimony of their enmity againſt him. I paſs to the

Second thing I propoſed, namely, To enquire into the cauſes and reaſons of this enmity: *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be diſcovered.* Here is the bottom of mens malice and enmity againſt the truth, it lays open their evil deeds and deſigns; men of honeſt intentions are not afraid of the light, becauſe it can do them no prejudice; it ſhews what they ought to do, and they have a deſire to know it, that they may do it; *He that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt.* Light is an advantage to good and virtuous actions, which the more they are ſeen and underſtood, the more they are approved and eſteemed; but they that do evil, *love darkneſs rather than light*, becauſe they are afraid their deeds ſhould be diſcovered.

And there is a twofold diſcovery of their actions, which bad men are afraid of. They are afraid they ſhould be diſcovered to themſelves, becauſe that creates trouble and uneaſineſs to them; and they are afraid they ſhould be diſcovered to others, becauſe that cauſeth ſhame.

1. They are afraid the evil of their actions ſhould be diſcovered to themſelves, becauſe that creates guilt and trouble; men do not care to ſee their own faults, and to have the vileneſs of their deeds truly repreſented to them. And this no doubt was the principal reaſon

which

which set the Scribes and Pharisees so much against our Saviour and his doctrine, because it discovered their hypocrisy to them: and how beautiful soever they appeared without, in their affected piety and formal devotion, yet *like painted sepulchres, they were within full of all uncleanness and rottenness.* Those real virtues which our Saviour taught, and the practice whereof he made so necessary to the eternal happiness and salvation of men, were a severe reproof of their lives and actions, and did discover to them how defective they were in that righteousness, which alone will bring men to the kingdom of God: so that his doctrine must needs be very troublesome to them, and they did not care to hear it, no more than a bad face loves to look in a true glass; they had flattered themselves before, in a conceit of their own righteousness, but when the light came, it discovered all their spots and deformities, so that they were no longer able to hide them from themselves; and this was a double trouble to them.

(1.) It robbed them of that good opinion which they had of themselves before; and it is no small vexation to a man to be put out of conceit with himself. Truth flatters no man, and therefore it is no wonder that so many are offended at it; a good man is satisfied with himself, and so would bad men fain be too; and therefore truth must needs be very unwelcome to them, because it attempts to deprive them of so great a satisfaction, and to chase away one of the most pleasant delusions in the world.

(2.) The discovery of mens faults fills them with trouble and guilt. Truth carries great evidence along with it; and is very convincing, and where men will not yield to it, and suffer themselves to be convinced by it, it gives them a great deal of disturbance, *Gravis malæ conscientiæ lux est*, says Seneca; "Light is very "troublesome to a bad conscience;" for it shews men their deformities whether they will or no; and when mens vices are discovered to them, they must either resolve to persist in them, or to break them off, and either of these is very grievous.

Some

Some men are so habituated to their vices, and so ongly addicted to them by their inclination, and ached to them by their interest, that they cannot it them without offering the greatest violence to emselves; it is like *cutting off a right hand, or pulg out a right eye*, as our Saviour expresses it. Now avoid this pain and trouble, most men, though ey be convinced of their faults, choose to contie in them; and yet this is full as troublesome as the ner, though it is hard to convince men of it. There not be a more restless state than that of guilt, the gs and torments whereof are continually increased mens practising contrary to the convictions of their n minds. Perhaps the trouble of repentance and ormation may be as great at first; but all this pain n order to a cure, and ends in health and ease; he who goes on in a bad course, after he is conced of the evil of it, lays a foundation of perpel anguish and torment, which, the longer he conues in his vices, will perpetually increase; so that is no wonder if *they that do evil, hate the light*, en it is every way so grievous and uneasy to them,

2. Bad men are enemies to the truth, because it covers the evil of their actions to others, which seth shame. The doctrine of the gospel lays o- the faults of men, and upbraids them with their es. Precepts of holiness and virtue, are a publick roof to the corrupt manners of mankind; and n hate publick reproof, because it shames them be- e others, and exposeth them to censure and conpt. This made the Pharisees so offended with Saviour's doctrine, because it was so severe a sure of their manners, and abated the reputation their sanctity and devotion; it discovered them at bottom to be very bad men; and, how righteous ver they appeared outwardly, to be *inwardly full hypocrisy and iniquity*. Now reputation is a tenpart, which few men can endure to have touched, ugh never so justly; and therefore no wonder if bad n be impatient of that truth which lays them o- to the world, and do by all means endeavour suppress and conceal it from themselves and others.

Thus I have as briefly as I could, given you an a count of the true ground and reason of the enmi of wicked men against the truth, because it discove their errors and faults, both to themselves and othe

I shall now only draw two or three inferences fro this discourse, by way of application, and so co clude.

I. From hence we may learn the true reason wh men are so apt to reject and oppose the principles religion, both of natural and revealed religion. I the principles of natural religion, I mean tho which nature acquaints us with; as the being of G and his providence, the immortality of the so and a future state of rewards and punishments aft this life: By the principles of revealed religio those which are revealed in the holy scriptures, specially in the gospel, which is the cleerest a most perfect revelation of the divine will, that Go ever made to the world. Now the reason why me oppose these principles, and endeavour to thro them off, is because they are loth to be under t restraint of them; they are so many checks and fe ters to men of ill designs, and bad lives, and there fore no wonder if they bite at them, and endeavo to break them off: They contradict the lusts of m and fly in their faces when they do wickedly; th are continually pricks in their eyes, and thorns their sides, and therefore they would fain be rid them: and therefore there is a plain reason wh these men oppose the truth, and endeavour to baf it; because it opposeth and affronts them in th wicked practices, in which they are resolved to co tinue. I do not say that all bad men fly thus hig as to endeavour to extinguish the belief of relig in themselves and others; but there are three so of men more especially, that think themselves co cerned to promote atheism either in themselves or th rs:

1. Those who are more enormously wicked a concerned to be atheists themselves, because the pri ciples of religion are so plainly inconsistent wi their practice. This is so visible, that they cann

b

ſee it; and therefore they muſt declare themſelves
mies to ſuch principles, as are ſo notoriouſly con-
·y to the courſe they live in.

2. Thoſe who, though their lives are not ſo noto-
uſly bad, have quicker underſtandings than the com-
n ſort of ſinners; becauſe theſe do ſooner diſcern
inconſiſtency of theſe principles with their own acti-
; and being reſolved not to reform, partly for the
ce of their own minds, and partly to vindicate them-
es to others, they declare war againſt theſe princi-
; and if they can overthrow them, they gain a-
ble advantage by it. They think they ſhall be at
e eaſe in their own minds, if they can but free
mſelves from the check and controul of theſe princi-
, and indeed they would be ſo, if they could root
n out: But nature hath planted them ſo deep, and
ted them ſo faſt, that when we have done all we
to extirpate them, they will ſpring up again. And
n they hope alſo by this means to vindicate them-
es to others, becauſe they can now no longer be
raided with the diſagreement of their principles
n their practice.

3. There are others, who though they be not atheiſts
nſelves, yet from the ſpirit and intereſt of a worldly
rch, are concerned to promote atheiſm in others.
l this hath been a very common practice of the
ors for the church of Rome in this age: When they
not gain men directly to their religion, they fetch
range compaſs, and try to make them infidels or
ticks, as to all religion; and then they doubt not to
g them about at laſt to the outward profeſſion of
r religion, which willl ſerve their turn well enough:
when men are once unhinged from the principles
di religion, it is no hard matter, for their own
: and intereſt, to perſuade them to an outward com-
nce with that religion which is coming in faſhion,
will bring them ſome advantage. And this is not
uncharitable ſuſpicion, but certain in fact and ex-
ience; that this impious method of ſeveral of the
ſts of the church of Rome, hath been one of the
ncipal ſources of the infidelity and ſcepticiſm of this

II. This is a great vindication of our religion, tha it can bear the light, and is ready to ſubmit itſelf t any impartial trial and examination: We are not afrai to expoſe our religion to the publick view of the world and to appeal to the judgment of mankind for the trut and reaſonableneſs of it: Truth loves to come abroa and be ſeen, being confident of her own native beaut and charms, of her own force and power to gain upo the minds of men: and on the contrary, it doth juſtl draw a great ſuſpicion upon any religion, if it declin the light; and nothing can render it more ſuſpected than for the teachers of it to make it their great car to keep people in the dark about it; or, if they chanc to peep into it, and to eſpy the defects of it, to aw them by the extremity of danger and ſuffering, fron declaring againſt thoſe errors and corruptions whic they have diſcovered in it. I do not know two worſ ſigns of the falſhood and corruption of any churc or religion, than ignorance and an inquiſition: Theſ two are ſhrewder marks of a falſe church, than all th fifteen marks which Bellarmine hath muſtered up are to prove the church of Rome to be the only true Chri ſtian church. Methinks their church and ours diffe like Egypt and Goſhen, in the time of the plague o darkneſs: Only in this they differ from Egypt, tha God ſent the plague among them, but the church o Rome affects it, and brings it upon themſelves; t darkneſs ſo groſs that *it may be felt;* and to make i more thick and palpable, they impoſe upon men th belief of direct nonſenſe, under the grave venerabl pretence of myſtery, as in their doctrine of tranſub ſtantiation. And the great deſign of the inquiſition, i to awe men from reading the ſcriptures, and fron ſearching into, and examining the grounds of thei religion, becauſe they think they will not bear the teſt *This is the condemnation* of that church, that *when ligh is come into the world, they love darkneſs rather tha light, becauſe their* doctrines and their *deeds are evil*

III. And laſtly, This gives us the plain reaſon wh ſome in the world are ſo careful to ſuppreſs an con-

nceal the truth, and to lock up the knowledge of it
om the people in an unknown tongue, and do ſo jea-
uſly guard all the avenues whereby light and know-
dge ſhould enter into them; becauſe their doctrines
d deſigns, and deeds are evil, and they are afraid
ey ſhould be diſcovered to be ſo. This is the true
aſon why they *love darkneſs rather than light:* For
e church of Rome *are wiſe* enough *in their generati-*
, to underſtand that nothing but the darkneſs of
eir ſhops can hinder people from diſcerning the falſe-
ſs of their wares; they have ſeveral things to put
to the people, which cannot bear the trial of a clear
d full light. What elſe makes them conceal the
rd of God from men? That great light which God
th ſet up in the world, to be *a lamp to our feet, and*
anthorn to our ſteps? It is not to keep out hereſy,
t light and truth. When they cannot be ignorant
at God has ſet up this candle on purpoſe to enlighten
e world, why do they *put it under a buſhel*, but
at they are guilty to themſelves, that ſeveral of their
ctrines and practices will be diſcovered and reproved
it?

What makes them in the face of the world to con-
al from the people the ſecond commandment, in
eir ordinary catechiſms and manuals, but leſt the
ople ſhould come to underſtand that God had ex-
ſly forbidden the worſhip of images? We do not
nceal thoſe texts, *feeding ſheep*, and *upon this rock*
ll I build my church, for fear the people ſhould diſ-
n the Pope's ſupremacy and infallibility in them, but
content to run the hazard of it, and let them find
em there if they can.

And then why do they mask the publick ſervice of
d, and the prayers and devotions of the people in
unknown tongue, but that they are afraid they
uld underſtand the groſs ſuperſtitions and idolatry
many of them? If they mean honeſtly; why do they
t ſuch a miſt about their religion? Why do they
ap and cover it all over in darkneſs, but that they
heartily afraid, that the more people underſtand it,
worſe they will like it?

The truth is, their doctrines are evil, and *their deeds are evil*, and plainly condemned almost in every page of the Bible; and therefore it is a dangerous book to be suffered in the hands of the people; and there is hardly any thing which the church of Rome contends against with more stiffness and zeal, than letting the people have the service of God, and the holy scriptures in a known tongue. When the office of the mass was not many years since, by some Bishops and others in France, translated into the vulgar tongue, for the benefit of the people, how did the then Pope Alexander the VII. thunder against them for it, calling them that did it *sons of perdition*, and condemning the thing as if it had been the wickedest thing in the world, and had directly tended to the overthrow of the Christian religion?

And then for the use of the holy scriptures in the vulgar tongue, they have put that under so many locks and keys, that the greatest caution in the world is used in the permission and allowance of it to any particular person: the Priest hath not power to do it, it is only the Bishops that can grant this liberty; and they do it very rarely, and only to those of whom they are very secure, and this power since that time again revoked; so that the gospel, which before our Saviour's appearance was *a mystery, hid from ages and generations*, continues so still to the common people of the church of Rome, and is under a thicker veil, more muffled and hid from the people, in an unknown tongue, than it was to the Jews under the obscure prophecies, and dark types and shadows of the Old Testament. So that though Christ be read in their churches every day, as Moses was to the Jews in their synagogues, yet he hath a veil upon his face as Moses had. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men, and neither enter in yourselves, nor suffer those that would enter to go in.* The people of the church of Rome are indeed to be pitied, who are kept in ignorance against their wills; but the governing part of

that church are without excuſe, who, to cover their ors and corruptions, hide the ſcriptures from the ople, *love darkneſs rather than light;* this therefore their great condemnation.

Witneſs the black and helliſh deſign of this day †, ch as never before entered into the heart of man, to ve ruined a whole kingdom at once in its Prince and preſentatives; and by a cruel ſudden blow, to have ken away the lives of the greateſt and moſt conſider- le aſſembly in the world. They muſt needs love rkneſs and hate the light, who have ſuch deſigns to rry on, and ſuch deeds of darkneſs to juſtify and ake good; they had need to ſuppreſs, and, if poſſi- y they can, to extinguiſh, not only that revealed truth God, but even the great principles of natural reli- on, the belief of a God, and a judgment to come, at attempt ſuch things.

Time was, when in deſpite of the cleareſt evidence the world, they did confidently deny that any ſuch ſign was laid by thoſe of their religion, but that it as a contrivance of ſome miniſter of ſtate, who drew a few raſh and hot-headed perſons of deſperate for- nes into it, and then betrayed and diſcovered them: it when the late popiſh plot broke out here, then they ere contented to own the gunpowder-treaſon, becauſe ey that were executed for it, did confeſs it, that ey might with a better colour bring themſelves off om this, which was ſo conſtantly denied by thoſe who ere condemned and executed for it: But this was it a ſhift and artifice to blind the clear evidence of is latter conſpiracy, which preſt ſo hard upon them: id ſince that, becauſe they are afraid it is ſtill believed, ey have uſed all imaginable arts, and have taken a eat deal of pains to waſh this black-a-moor; yet e negro is a negro ſtill, and I doubt not but they are ll at work, carrying on the ſame deſign, which if od do not mercifully fruſtrate and diſappoint, is like laſt to involve this nation in great miſery and con- ſion.

But

† *Preached November* 5. 1684.

But the Lord reigneth, therefore let the earth rejoice, and the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. He that sitteth in the heavens laughs at them, the Lord shall have them in derision. There are many plots and devices in the heart of man: *but the counsel of the Lord that shall stand.* And if we would but live up to the light which we enjoy, and adorn our reformed religion by an holy and unblameable conversation; if we would avoid those bloody and rebellious ways, which are so natural and suitable to their religion, and so contrary to ours, and so scandalous to all religion; if we would break off our sins by repentance, and put an end to our foolish differences and divisions, by returning to the ancient peace and unity of this once happy and firmly compacted church, we have no reason yet to despair, but that God would return to us in mercy and loving kindness, and think thoughts of peace towards us, and preserve the best religion in the world to us, and our posterity after us.

Now unto him that hath delivered us so often, and so wonderfully, and doth deliver us, and we trust will still deliver us; to him be honour and glory, praise and thanksgiving, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CCXLVII.

True liberty, the result of Christianity.

JOHN viii. 36.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

THE meaning of these words will best appear by considering the occasion of them, which was this. Upon our Saviour's preaching to the Jews, many believed on him; whereupon he tells

lls them, that if they continued in his doctrine, did
ıt only yield a present assent, but firmly embraced it,
ıd framed their life and practice according to it, then
ey would be his disciples indeed, and they should
ıow the truth; they would come by degrees to a
ore perfect knowledge and understanding of it, and
ıe truth would make them free. At this expression
being made free, they were somewhat offended;
ecause they took themselves to be the freest people in
ıe world, and, by virtue of God's covenant with A-
aham, from whom they were descended, to have ma-
privileges and immunities conferred upon them, a-
ıve the rest of mankind, ver. 33. *They answered him, e be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to y man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?* hey took this for a great affront to them, and an insi-
ıation that they were in slavery and bondage. But
ey mistook our Saviour, who did not speak of an out-
ard and civil servitude; and yet, if their pride and
ıceit of themselves would have suffered them to
ınsider it, it was true likewise in that sense, that they
ıd lost their liberty, being at that time in great bon-
ıge and subjection to the Romans. But that was
ıt the thing our Saviour meant; he spake of a spiri-
ıal servitude, which if men were truly sensible of, is
r more grievous than that of the body and the out-
ard man: ver. 34, 35. *Jesus answered them, Veri-
, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in e house for ever; but the son abideth for ever:* That
, a servant hath no right to any thing, but is per-
ctly at the disposal of his master, being a part of his
oods, which he may use as he pleaseth; but the son
ath a right to the inheritance, and is as it were Lord
f the estate; and then it follows, *If the Son there-
ore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

In which words our Saviour seems to allude to a
ustom which was in some of the cities of Greece,
nd perhaps in other places, whereby the son and
eir had a power to adopt brethren, and to give them
he liberty and privilege of the family. If the Son of
God

God ſet you free from this ſpiritual ſlavery, and adopt you to be his brethren, *then are you free indeed;* not only in a vain opinion and conceit, as you take yourſelves to be by virtue of being Abraham's children: but really and in truth, ye ſhall be aſſerted to a truer and more excellent kind of liberty, than that which ye value yourſelves ſo much upon, by virtue of being Abraham's ſeed. *Then ſhall ye be free indeed.*

So that our Saviour's meaning is plainly this; that the doctrine of the Chriſtian religion, which the Son of God came to preach to the world, heartily embraced, does aſſert men to the trueſt and moſt perfect kind of liberty. I know this is but a metaphor, whereby the benefits and advantages which the doctrine of God our Saviour hath brought to mankind, are expreſt and ſet forth to us: But it is a very eaſy and fit metaphor, and does convey the thing intended very fully to our minds, and hath a great deal of truth and reality under it. And to the end we may underſtand it the better, I ſhall do theſe two things:

Firſt, Obſerve to you in the general, That the Spirit of God, in the holy ſcriptures, delights very much to ſet forth to us the benefits and advantages of the Chriſtian religion, by metaphors taken from ſuch things as are moſt pleaſant and deſirable to men.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew particularly in what reſpects the Son of God by his doctrine makes us free. For when *the Son* is ſaid to *make us free*, we are to underſtand that it is by his doctrine; for that our Saviour had expreſly ſaid before, *Ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.*

Firſt, I ſhall obſerve to you in the general, that the Spirit of God in the holy ſcriptures, delights very much to ſet forth to us the benefits and advantages of the Chriſtian religion, by metaphors taken from ſuch things as are moſt pleaſant and deſirable to men; more eſpecially by theſe three, of *light*, *life* and *liberty*; than which nothing can be named that is more delightful and valuable to men.

By *light*; of which Solomon ſays that *it is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing for the eyes to behold the ſun.* Hence our Saviour is called *the Sun of righteouſneſs*, Mal.

Gal. iv. 2. and *the light of the world.* And ver. 12. of this chapter, *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness.* And chap. 9. he is called *the true light; That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;* or, as the words should rather be translated, *which coming into the world, lighteth every man.* He is said to *give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,* Luke i. 79. To be a *light to lighten the nations,* Luke ii. 32. And the doctrine which he preached is called *a light,* John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.* And 2 Cor. iv. 6. the gospel is called *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*

So likewise by the metaphor of *life;* which is that which men value above all other things, John xi. 25. *I am the resurrection and the life.* And John xiv. 6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* And because bread is the chief support of life, our Saviour is likewise set forth to us under that notion. John vi. 32. *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* And we are said to *have life through his name,* John xx. 31. *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.* And the doctrine of the gospel is likewise called *the word of life,* Phil. ii. 16.

And to come to my present purpose, the benefits and advantages of the gospel are frequently represented to us under the notion of *liberty,* and *redemption* from slavery and bondage, which among men is valued next to life itself. Hence are those titles given to our Saviour, of *a redeemer,* and *deliverer;* and he is said to have *obtained eternal redemption for us,* Heb. ix. 12. he is said to have *given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,* Tit. ii. 14. And the publishing of the gospel is compared to the proclaiming of the year of jubilee among the Jews, where-

in

in all persons were set at liberty, Isa. lxi. 1. 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.* Upon this account likewise the gospel is called by St. James *the royal law*, and *the perfect law of liberty*, James i. 25.

Thus you see that this is one of the principal metaphors whereby the scripture sets forth to us the advantages of the Christian doctrine; and that it is not seldom and casually used, but frequently, and upon design, as that which most fitly represents to us the benefits we have by the gospel.

Secondly, I shall now in the next place shew more particularly in what respects the Son of God by his doctrine, may be said to *make us free*. And that in these two respects:

I. As it frees us from the bondage of ignorance, and error, and prejudice.

II. From the slavery of our lusts and passions.

1. It frees us from the bondage of ignorance, and error, and prejudice, which is a more inveterate and obstinate error. And this is a great bondage to the mind of man, to live in ignorance of those things which are useful for us to know, to be mistaken about those matters which are of great moment and concernment to us to be rightly informed in. Ignorance is the confinement of our understandings, as knowledge and right apprehensions of things are a kind of liberty and enlargement to the mind of man. Under this slavery the world groaned, and were *bound in* these *chains of darkness* for many years, till the *light of the glorious gospel* broke in upon the world, and our blessed Saviour, who is *truth*, came to set us free.

As for the heathen part of the world, the generality of them lived in gross ignorance of God, and pernicious mistakes concerning him. So the Apostle tells us, Rom. i. 21. that *they were vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: and*

l, Eph. iv. 17, 18. that *they walk in the vanity of r mind, having the underſtanding darkened, being nated from the life of God, through the ignorance t is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart.* ey had groſs and unworthy, and falſe apprehenſions cerning the nature of God, by which they were miſ- into horrible ſuperſtitions, and abominable idola- s: and in conformity to the falſe notions which they of their deities, and in imitation of their fabulous ies concerning them, they were guilty of all manner lewdneſs and vice; ſo that through their miſtakes God, they were altogether eſtranged from that vir- is and holy and divine life, which men ought to : and conſidering what apprehenſions they had of l, many of their ſuperſtitions and vices were almoſt roidable. And by this advantage of the ignorance mankind was ſunk into, the Devil did chiefly main- and keep up his kingdom; it being next to impoſſi- for men amidſt ſo much darkneſs to ſee the right , and walk in it. It was eaſy for him when he had enſlaved their underſtandings, and blinded their ; *to lead them captive at his pleaſure.*

ea the Jews themſelves, though they enjoyed ma- degrees of light beyond the reſt of the world, had the advantage of frequent revelations, yet was but darkneſs, in compariſon of thoſe clear veries which were made to mankind by the goſpel; which many things are revealed to us, which *hid from ages and generations;* and one of the important truths, and of the greateſt efficacy up- he minds of men, is brought to light, *viz.* the inty of a future ſtate, and the rewards of it. This Apoſtle tells us, is *made manifeſt by the appear- of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed h, and brought life and immortality to light ugh the goſpel,* 2 Tim. i. 10. Under the diſpen- n of the law, the Jews had very imperfect no- concerning the divine nature, and the beſt and acceptable way of worſhipping God, which they ght to conſiſt in external rites and carnal ob- nces, in waſhing of the body, and in ſacrifices

of lambs and goats, and other creatures; for wh
reason, the law is frequently represented in the N
Testament as a state of bondage and restraint. I
called *a yoke which neither they nor their fathers w*
able to bear; a *schoolmaster* which kept men und
severe awe and discipline. It is represented as a
son, and a condition of restraint, Gal. iii. 23. *Bef*
faith came, that is, before the gospel was revea
we were kept under the law, shut up. Upon
same account the temper and disposition of men un
that dispensation is called *a spirit of bondage; Ye h*
not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, R
viii. 15. that is, ye are not still under the law.
on the contrary, the gospel is represented as a stat
liberty and *adoption*, whereby men are freed from
bondage they were in under the law: So that there
great need in reference to the *Jews*, as well as
heathen world, of a clearer light, and more perfect
velation, to free the minds of men from the servit
of ignorance and error.

And this was a bondage indeed, worse than
of Egypt or Babylon, because they were in love w
this slavery, and fond of their fetters; and when *l*
came into the world, they loved darkness rather t
light. So that it was one of the hardest things in
world to convince them of their ignorance, and
make them patient of instruction, and willing to
set free from those violent and unreasonable prejud
against our Saviour and his doctrine, which they w
possest withal; insomuch that the Apostles found i
easier work to gain the heathen world than the J
For though the Heathen had less knowledge, yet t
pride and prejudice was not so great; they were
thicker darkness than the Jews; but when the l
came, they were more willing to entertain it, and
not shut their eyes so wilfully against it; when
prison doors were open, they were glad to come
and accept of liberty: but the Jews were so obstina
fixt in their prejudice, that they would not let
truth set them free. When this jubilee, this *acc*
able year of the Lord was proclaimed, they ref

benefit of it, and like those who were of a ser-
disposition among them, they were contented to
e *their ears bored through*, and to be *servants for*
r.

But yet it was a great liberty which the gospel of-
d to them, had they been sensible of it. For how
/ is the mind of man, when it finds itself freed
n those errors and prejudices, which it sees others
our under? And how does it rejoice in this liberty?
tainly one of the greatest pleasures of human nature,
ne discovery of truth, yea even in curious specula-
s, which are of no great concernment to us. How
Archimedes transported upon a mathematical dis-
ry, so that he thought no sacrifice too great to
to the gods by way of acknowledgment? But
ly the pleasure is justly greater, in matters of so
t moment and consequence to our happiness. The
t of the sun is not more grateful to our outward
e, than the light of truth is to the soul. By igno-
e, and error, and prejudice, the mind of man
ttered and entangled; so that it hath not the free
of itself: but when we are rightly informed, e-
ially in those things which are useful and necessary
is to know, we recover our liberty, and feel our-
s enlarged from the restraints we were in before.
this effect the saving truths of the gospel have
the minds of men, above any discoveries that
were made to the world. Christianity hath set
world free from those chains of darkness and igno-
it was bound withal, and from the most danger-
and pernicious errors, and that in matters of
est consequence and importance. This is the first
of freedom, which we have by the doctrine of
gospel, freedom from the bondage of ignorance,
and prejudice, in matters of greatest moment
importance to our happiness. And though this
ty be highly to be valued; yet the other, which
going to speak to, is more considerable, and
is,

. Freedom from the slavery of our passions and
from the tyranny of vicious habits and practices.

And this, which is the saddest and worst kind of bondage, the doctrine of the gospel is a most proper and powerful means to free us from; and this is that which I suppose is principally intended by our Saviour. For when the Jews told him, that they did not stand in need of any liberty, that *they were Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any*, our Saviour declares what kind of bondage and slavery he meant; *he that committeth sin is the servant of sin*. Wickedness and vice is the bondage of the will, which is the proper seat of liberty: and therefore there is no such slave in the world, as a man that is subject to his lusts, that is under the tyranny of strong and unruly passions, of vicious inclinations and habits. This man is a slave to many masters, who are very imperious and exacting; and the more he yieldeth to them, with the greater tyranny and rigour they will use him. One passion hurries a man one way, and another drives him fiercely another; one lust commands him upon such a service, and another calls him off to another work: so that a man under the command and authority of his lusts and passions, is like the centurion's servants, when *they say to him, come, he* must *come;* and when *they say, go, he* must *go*, when *they say, do this, he* must *do it;* because he is in subjection to them.

How does a man lose the power over himself by any inordinate passions! How do anger and revenge hurry a man into rash and mischievous actions, which he repents of commonly as soon as they are done! How do malice and envy torment the mind, and keep it in continual labour and uneasiness! What a slave and drudge is he, who is possest with any inordinate love for the world, and desire of riches! How does the tyranny of ambition thrust men upon dangers, and torment them with disappointment! What a bondage is it to be under the slavish fear of death! and how does every lust and vicious habit domineer over a man! so that though he desire and many times resolve to do otherwise, yet he is not able to assert his own liberty, and resist the weakest temptations when they come in his way.

And

And that which makes their condition the worse, that every man is wholly at first, and afterwards some degree consenting to his own bondage. In o- er cases most men are made slaves against their wills, the force and power of others: but the wicked n chooseth this condition, and voluntarily submits nself to it. There are very few to be found in the rld, that are so stupid and senseless, so sick of their erty, and so weary of their happiness, as to put them- ves into this condition: but the wicked *sells himself do wickedly*, and parts with that liberty which he y keep; and if he would resolve to do it, and beg d's grace to that purpose, none could take it from n.

And, which is an aggravation of his servile condi- n, he makes himself a slave to his own servants, to se that were born to be subject to him, his own ap- ites, and inclinations and passions. So that this is the rst kind of slavery, so much worse than that of the es and gallies, as the soul and spirit of a man is re noble and excellent than his body.

Now the doctrine of the gospel is the most pro- and effectual means in the world to free us from s servitude; by presenting us with motives and uments to rescue ourselves from this slavery, and ferring upon us strength and assistance to that l. The doctrine of our Saviour represents to us those considerations which may convince us of the erable bondage of those who are under the power dominion of sin, and of the fatal inconvenience continuing in that state; that *the end of these things* be death: and to encourage us to vindicate our liberty, offers us the grace and assistance of God's Spirit, to help our weakness, and to strength- our holy resolutions, and to carry us through those culties, which of ourselves we are not able to quer. The Son of God stands by us in this con- , *and the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from dead*, works in us; and if we would make use his strength which is offered to us, we may *break bonds in sunder, and cast these cords from us*

for

for greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world; the Spirit of God is ſtronger than that *ſpirit which works in the children of diſobedience.* So that there is nothing wanting to ſet us at liberty, but the reſolution of our own wills. If we will *quit ourſelves like men,* the power of God and his grace is ready to take our part againſt all our enemies. *The Son of God was manifeſted for this end, to take away ſin, and to deſtroy the works of the Devil, to redeem us from all iniquity,* and *to deliver us from the powers of darkneſs.* And why ſhould we deſpair of victory and ſucceſs when *the captain of our ſalvation,* who hath *led captivity captive,* leads us on, and, as an encouragement to us, ſhews us his own triumphs and conqueſts which he hath made over ſin and hell? Are we enſlaved to the world, and the luſts of it? He hath *overcome the world;* and by faith we may overcome it, that is by a firm belief and perſuaſion of thoſe things which he hath revealed to us; *for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Does the fear of ſufferings, and perſecution, and death, keep us in bondage? The Son of God hath reſcued us from this fear, by ſetting before us the glorious hopes of an eternal life. For nothing makes men afraid of death, but the want of aſſurance of another life, and of the happineſs of it: but this our Saviour hath *brought to light by the goſpel.* By his own death and reſurrection he hath given us perfect aſſurance of life after death, and a bleſſed immortality. And this, the Apoſtle tells us, was one great reaſon why the Son of God took our mortal nature upon him, that he might conquer death for us, and free us from the ſlaviſh fear of it: Heb. ii. 14, 15. *Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame, that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime ſubject to bondage.* The inferences from this diſcourſe, ſhall be theſe two:

Firſt, To ſhew us what that liberty is which the Son of God confers upon us. It is not a liberty

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; for that our Saviour tells us, is a state of slave- and bondage; *he that committeth sin, is the ser- nt of sin.* This use indeed some made of the Chri- n doctrine, to encourage themselves in sin, under e pretence of Christian liberty, and that in the A- stles days, So St. Peter tells us, 2 Epist. ii. 19. *hile they promise them liberty, they themselves are e servants of corruption,* and in bondage to their sts. But nothing can be more directly contrary to e great design and intention of the gospel, which deed promises and declares liberty; but not from e laws of God, and the obligation of their duty, t as the Apostle calls it, from *the law of sin and ath.* Christian liberty does not consist in being free om our duty, but in doing those things which really nd to our perfection and happiness, in being *free om sin,* and *becoming the servants of God.* This is e proper use and exercise of our liberty, to do what e ought, to live according to reason and the laws of od, which are *holy, just, and good.* The freedom hich the Son of God designed, was our being rescu- l from the bondage of sin and corruption, of the evil and our own lusts, *that being delivered from the nds of* these *enemies, we might serve God without ar, in holiness and righteousness before him all the ys of our lives.*

Secondly, To persuade us to assert our liberty, *and and fast in it.* The Son of God hath done that hich is sufficient on his part to vindicate mankind om the slavery of their lusts and passions: and if we ill vigorously set about the work, and put forth our ndeavours, we may rescue ourselves from this bon- age. And because it must be acknowledged that this no easy work, therefore by way of direction and en- ouragement, I would commend to men these following rticulars:

1. To consider seriously the misery and danger of his condition, and the necessity of freeing ourselves rom this slavery. I have shewn that it is the worst ind of bondage, and it hath the saddest consequen- es. Some service, though it be hard and grievous, et men are content to endure it, because it may

prove

prove beneficial to them, and is in order to a greater freedom; but the service of sin is altogether unprofitable. *What fruit had ye then,* says the Apostle *in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. The wages of sin is death.* All the reward that shall be given us for this service is misery and punishment, *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul that doth evil.* So that it is necessary that we should shake off this yoke, as we desire to escape the chains of darkness and the unspeakable and insupportable misery of another world. He that now makes us his slaves to do his work, will torment us for the doing of it to all eternity.

2. Seeing this condition is so insupportable, and the consequences of it so dreadful, let us take up a firm and manly resolution to free ourselves from this slavery. It is no easy matter to break off a vicious habit, which we have been long accustomed to; nay, perhaps it is one of the most difficult things that human nature can attempt; and therefore it requires great firmness of mind, and strength of resolution. It is next to the going against nature, and the conquering of that; for custom is a sort of nature, and every habit is a bowing of nature a certain way, and when nature hath once long stood bent one way, it is hard to restore it to its former condition; and nothing but a great resolution, taken up upon a full conviction of the necessity of the thing, will carry us through.

3. For the encouragement of this resolution, consider what assistance God hath promised us. Indeed when we consider the difficulty of the thing, and the weakness and unstedfastness of our minds, how apt we are to give over when we meet with great opposition and resistance, we might justly be discouraged in our attempts, if we had nothing but our own strength to trust to. But God hath promised to stand by us, and second us in the conflict; and *if he be for us, what can stand against us?* There is nothing too hard for a stout resolution backed by the grace of God.

4. That

4. That we may not be discouraged by an apprehension of too much difficulty in the thing, consider that the main difficulty is at first. So soon as we have resolutely begun, the work is half done; if we can but sustain the first burnt, the enemy will give ground apace; every day we shall get more strength, and the habits of sin will be weakened. In all cases there is difficulty in breaking off a habit, and doing contrary to what we have been used and accustomed to do: but after we have practised the contrary a while, it will every day grow more easy and pleasant; for custom will make any thing so.

5. Consider that the longer we continue in this state, the harder we shall find it to rescue ourselves from it; for sin will every day get more strength, and we shall have less; for vice is so far from being mortified by age, that by every day's continuance in it we increase the power of it; and so much strength as any one adds to his disease, he takes from himself. And this is a double weakening of us, when we do not only lose our strength, but the enemy gets it, and will employ it against us. Therefore let us presently set about this work, *to-day, while it is called to-day, lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* The longer we continue in sin, the farther God withdraws his grace from us; and not only so, but the Devil gets a greater dominion over us, and a firmer possession of us, till by degrees we do insensibly slide into that state, in which, without the miraculous grace of God, we are like for ever to continue. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* It is next to a natural impossibility for a man to rescue himself out of this state.

6. And lastly, be not discouraged, though ye do not meet with that success at first, which ye expected and hoped for; though after several attempts to recover your liberty, ye be foiled and cast back. It sometimes so happens that some are by a mighty resolution, and very extraordinary and overpowering degree of God's grace, reclaimed from a wicked life at once: but in the ordinary methods of God's grace, evil habits

bits are mastered and subdued by degrees; and though we be resolved upon a better course, and entered upon it, yet the inclinations to our former course will frequently return upon us, and may sometimes too prevail. And we are not to think this strange, it is nothing but what is natural, and may reasonably be expected. It is no just ground of discouragement to us, if after we have engaged in a good course, we be sometimes pulled back again, and the habits which we are breaking off from, gather strength, and make head again; as an enemy after he is routed, and hath begun to fly, does frequently rally, and makes as if he would renew the fight again, and may perhaps prevail in a little skirmish: but for all this, we are nevertheless in a fair way to victory, if we will pursue our first advantage, and prosecute it vigorously. Nay, this should be so far from discouraging us, that it should make us resume new courage, that we may not lose what we have got.

I the rather mention this, because many miscarry upon this account, and many good resolutions and attempts to vindicate our liberty from the bondage of corruption, are given over and come to nothing, because men make false accounts of things, and expect to conquer and get a complete victory at first: and indeed they are taught by those who are not well skilled in this spiritual warfare, that this work is done in an instant, and the habits of grace and virtue are infused into men at once; and if men give back, all they had done is lost, and that they are in a worse condition than if they had never begun: whereas usually it is quite otherwise, and the habits of goodness are acquired, as other habits are, by slow degrees at first, and with a great deal of conflict; and it is a good while before a man comes to that confirmed state, that he may be said to have conquered; but if he persist in his resolutions, and when he hath received some foil take heart again, he is in the way to victory; and though he be not in a perfect state of acceptance with God, yet his endeavours have the acceptance of good beginnings, and he hath no reason to be discouraged at what he had reason to expect when he began this work, if he calculate things aright:

right: and they that tell men otherwiſe, have taken p falſe notions in divinity, but do not conſult human ature, and the uſual progreſs of God's grace in the onverſion of a ſinner, and reclaiming him from a wic-ed courſe; and have not taken ſufficient care to re-oncile their notions of divinity, with the nature of ings, and the certain and undoubted experience of ankind. Therefore let no man be faint and diſcou-ged upon this account, and think the thing is not to e done, becauſe he doth not meet with perfect ſucceſs t firſt; for this ſeldom happens, and therefore ought ot to be expected: but let him ſtill go on and rein-orce his reſolutions, and the oppoſition and difficulty ill abate, and the work continually grow eaſier upon is hand, and *the God of peace will* at laſt *tread down atan under his feet.*

SERMON CCXLVIII.

The duty of improving the preſent opportunity and advantages of the goſpel.

JOHN xii. 35.

hen ſaid Jeſus unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you.

Preached Feb. 15. 1685.

THEN ſaid Jeſus unto them; that is, upon the diſcourſe he had juſt before had with them, concerning his approaching death, and departure out f this world; at the mention whereof, they were of-nded and troubled; but inſtead of that, our Saviour puts

puts them upon that which would be of real use and benefit to them, to improve those advantages and opportunities, which they were like to enjoy but a little while; *Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth.*

Yet a little while is the light with you. This our Saviour speaks of himself, and his personal presence and teaching among them; *Yet a little while is the light with you;* for so he frequently calls himself and his doctrine. John iii. 19. *Light is come into the world.* John viii. 12. *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life;* that is, such a light as will direct him in the way to eternal life; and John ix. 5. *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

Walk while ye have the light. Light is the opportunity of action, and going about our business, and therefore it is joined with walking and working, as in the text I mentioned before, *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.* And John ix. 4. where the continuance of this opportunity of light is called *the day*, and the ceasing or withdrawing of it, *the night: I must work the works of him that sent me*, says our Lord, *while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* Therefore we should walk and work while we have the light.

Lest darkness come upon you. And this will be a dismal and fatal time, when all opportunity of walking and working will be at an end; for when the light hath left us, we shall not be able to see what to do, or whither to go, as our Saviour adds to inforce his exhortation of making use of the present advantages and opportunities. *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

All this our Saviour plainly speaks to the Jews, with relation to his own personal presence and preach-

ing

among them, which he tells them would shortly
e and be at an end. In which sense these words
not concern us, but only the Jews at that time,
whom they were spoken; but by an equality of
on, the advice here given by our Saviour, first
immediately to the Jews, may be recommended
s, in the general reason and intention of it; to
I say, who, though we do not enjoy the light of
st's personal presence, yet we have the light of
loctrine, and the power and presence of his Spi-
going along with it, and supplying the absence
is person; so that in effect we have all the ad-
ages and means of salvation, which the Jews
and we know not how long they may be con-
d, or how soon they may be taken from us;
herefore the general reason and intendment of
dvice concerns us equally with the Jews; and
dering the uncertainty of the continuance of
neans and opportunities of salvation, either to
ticular people or person, we may very well ap-
hese words of our Saviour to ourselves, and as
ey had been spoken by him to us as well as to
ews; *Yet a little while is the light with you;*
while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon
for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not
er he goeth.

bstracting then from the particular occasion and
ing of the words, I shall prosecute the gene-
ason and intention of them, as it may be ac-
modated to us, and that in these following par-
rs:

rst. As we have the like means and opportunities
ice and salvation as the Jews had.

condly, In that the season of their continuance
certain to us, as well as it was to them; we
not how long they may be continued, nor
oon they may be taken from us.

irdly, In that the same duty and obligation lies
us, of improving the present advantages and
tunities which we enjoy. *Walk while ye have*
ht.

Fourthly, In that we may justly apprehend the li danger and dismal consequence of being deprived those happy opportunities and advantages. *Lest da ness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkn knoweth not whither he goeth.*

Fifthly, I shall consider by what things God more especially provoked, to deprive a people the means and opportunities of grace and salvati

And then, *lastly*, What is the way and means prevent so dismal a judgment, and procure, if may be *a lengthening of our tranquillity*. I shall over these particulars as briefly as I can.

First, That we have the like means and oppor nities of grace and salvation, as the Jews had; the very same in kind, and all the circumstances them, as I noted before, but the same equivalen and in substance, and to all the purposes of our ternal salvation and happiness, if we make a ri use of them. The Jews had the personal prese and preaching of Christ among them; they did c verse familiarly with him, did eat and drink in presence, and heard him teach in their streets; wh was a very valuable and signal privilege, vouc fed only to that people, and only in that age. as to his personal presence and converfation, *was not sent, but only to the lost sheep of the h of Israel.*

But we have still the same means and advant in substance, which they had; the gospel is pre ed to us, as well as to them; we have all the l and direction concerning our duty, and all the couragement to holiness and obedience which had; and there is still the same inward opera and concurrence of God's Holy Spirit, accor nying his word, and making way for the en tainment of it; if there be but the same obsequi ness of faith in us, and readiness to receive the t in the love of it, that we may be saved.

Nay we have several advantages above th that the Christian religion does not ly under t prejudices in respect of us, which it did with then hath been now for many ages received and estal

among us, and the prejudice of education is on its ; and it hath had great and manifold confirmation n to it, since our Saviour's time, by the wonderful ess and prevalency of it in the world, notwithstand- all the disadvantages it lay under, and the mighty osition that was raised against it, by the remarkable lling of many of our Saviour's predictions concerning final destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and desolation of that city, and the dispersion of the ish nation over the world, and their being hated of ations, which hath now continued for above six- hundred years, and we see it at this day, as if the idence of God had ordered it on purpose, for a ling monument and testimony in all ages, of the n of the Christian religion.

o that, blessed be God, there is no want of means ring us to the knowledge of the truth, that we may aved; no want of evidence to confirm to us the n of this religion; there is nothing wanting on G 's part; if there be any failure and defect, it is urs, *who will not walk in the light, while we have nor know in this our day the things which belong ur peace, before they be hid from our eyes.*

econdly, The season of the continuance of these ns of grace and salvation, which are afforded to us, certain to us, as well as it was to them. We w not how long they may be vouchsafed to us, nor soon they may be taken away from us: *Yet a lit- while the light is with you*, saith our Saviour to the s, meaning, that he himself should shortly be put death, and removed from them. This is not our case: but thus far it agrees, that the light the gospel, and the blessed opportunities which eby we enjoy, are of an uncertain continuance, may be of a lesser or longer duration, as God seth, and according as we make use of them, and ean ourselves under them. I remember there is a odd passage in Mr. Herbert's poems, which whe- it be only the prudent conjecture and foresight of

a wise man, or there be something more prophetical
it, I cannot tell; it is this:

Religion stands on tiptoes in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand,
When Seine shall swallow Tiber, and the Thame
By letting in them both, pollute her streams,
Then shall religion to America flee:
They have their times of gospel, even as we.

The meaning of it is this, that when the vices of
taly shall pass into France, and the vices of both sh
overspread England, then the gospel will leave th
parts of the world, and pass into America, to visit th
dark regions, which have so long *sat in darkness a*
the shadow of death. And this is not so improbab
if we consider, what vast colonies in this last age ha
been transplanted out of Europe into those parts, as
were on purpose to prepare and make way for such
change. But however that be, considering how im
ety and all manner of wickedness do reign among
we have too much cause to apprehend, that if we
not reform and grow better, the providence of G
will find some way or other to deprive us of that ligh
which is so abused and affronted by our wicked a
lewd lives; and God seems now to say to us, as o
Lord did to the Jews, *Yet a little while is the lig*
with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkn
come upon you. I proceed to the

Third particular, that there is the same duty a
obligation upon us, that was upon the Jews, of i
proving the present advantages and opportunities
salvation, which we enjoy: and our Lord says to
as well as to them, *Walk while ye have the light.* I
expects from us, that we should make use of tho
blessed opportunities, and answer those manifold a
vantages, which are afforded to us, above most n
tions of the world; that we should improve o
knowledge in religion, and advance daily in t
practice of it; that we should work *while it is da*
a

l that the more light we have, the better our lives uld be. For this is *to walk in the light;* to make of the present advantages and opportunities, and be active and industrious *to work out our own salvation; to be fruitful in every good word and work, to abound in all the fruits of righteousness, which by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.* ne Apostle St. Peter tells us at large, what obligation knowledge of the gospel lays upon all Christians, make answerable improvement in all goodness and tue, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *According as divine power hath given unto us all things that pern unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of n that hath called us to glory and virtue; Whereby given unto us exceeding great and precious proses, that by these you might be partakers of the dine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in world through lust. And besides this, giving all igence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, owledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to nperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and godliness, brotherly kindness: and to brotherly kindss, charity. For if these things be in you, and aund, they make you that ye shall neither be barren r unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus rist. But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and nnot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was rged from his old sins.* If the gospel have not this ect upon us, if we make no use of the light of it, do not consider that the proper effect of the Christi- religion, is to purge men from those sins and vices ich reigned in them before; and if it have not this ect upon us, it had been better for us to have been thout this light and knowledge. So the same Apoe declares, chap. ii. 21. *For it had been better for em not to have known the way of righteousness, an after they have known it, to turn from the holy mmandment delivered unto them.* I proceed to the *Fourth* particular, That if we make no improvent of these happy advantages and opportunities, e may justly apprehend the like danger, and dis-

mal consequences of being deprived of them. *Wa while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whith he goeth.* God's dealing with the Jews upon this pr vocation was very terrible; and, as the Apostle sai upon another occasion, *it serves for an example a admonition to us, upon whom the ends of the world a come.* They who not only opposed and rejected th light which God sent among them, but did what them lay to extinguish and put it out, by *putting death the Son of God*, deserved to have been imm ately deprived of that light, and to have been left utter darkness: but God was pleased in his great me cy to grant a reprieve to them, and to continue t great blessing of the gospel to them for forty yea longer: but when, notwithstanding this, they st continued impenitent, God at last withdrew this ligh and by a particular providence gave warning to t Christians to flee from Jerusalem, just before the sieg was laid to it; *and then darkness came upon them i deed, and they knew not whither they went, nor wh they did. The things of their peace were then h from their eyes, because they would not know the tim of their visitation.* They fell into the greatest diso ders and confusions, and, by the just judgment God, were strangely blinded and hardened to their ow ruin; and being forsaken of God, and of his glorio gospel, which they had rejected, they exercised a sorts of violence and cruelty upon one another, an were abandoned to all manner of wickedness and folly not only offending against their own law, for whic they pretended so great a veneration, but committin things contrary to all laws of nature and humanity as may be seen at large in the history of the siege o Jerusalem, written by Josephus who lived in that time

And there is the like danger, I do not say of th very same judgments, (for there was something pe culiar in their case, they not only rejecting and abu sing the gospel, but *killing* and *crucifying the Son o God*, who brought those glad tidings to them;) bu of very great and dismal calamities, if ever we pro

)ke God by our abuſe of the goſpel, and great un-uitfulneſs under it, to deprive us of ſo invaluable a eſſing. Whenever that leaves us, we may expect ıe moſt diſmal judgments and calamities to break in)on us.

For that parable concerning the husbandmen, who ſtead of rendering to their Lord their fruits of his neyard in due ſeaſon, evilly intreated and killed thoſe hom he ſent to them; I ſay, this parable, though it ımediately reſpected the Jews, yet it does in propor-)n concern all that live unfruitfully under the goſpel, atth. xxi. 40, 41. *When the Lord therefore of the neyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe husband-n? They ſay unto him, He will miſerably deſtroy oſe wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to o-r husbandmen, which ſhall render him the fruits in eir ſeaſons.* And ver. 43, 44. *Therefore I ſay un-you,* (ſays our Lord) *The kingdom of God ſhall be ken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth fruits thereof. And whoſoever ſhall fall on this ne ſhall be broken; but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, will grind him to powder.*

The removal of the goſpel from any people, as it is greateſt judgment in itſelf, ſo it is likely to be accom-nied with the greateſt temporal miſeries and calami-s: And ſo in fact it hath happened not only to the ws, whoſe caſe, (as I ſaid before) hath ſomething it peculiar, but to other churches and nations; To ſeven famous churches of Aſia, the cities of them ng demoliſhed and laid waſte, and the very place of eral of them hardly known at this day. And ſo-ewiſe it hath happened to the flouriſhing churches of rica, where Chriſtianity is extinguiſhed, and the ce of them now the great ſeat of barbariſm and ſla-y.

And God ſeems to ſet theſe examples before us, a dreadful warning and admonition to us, and to to us as he did to the people of Jeruſalem, Jer. . 12, 13, 14, 15. *But go ye now unto my place hich was in Shiloh, where I ſet my name at the ſt, and ſee what I did to it, for the wickedneſs of people Iſrael. And now becauſe ye have done all theſe*

these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, ri sing up early, and speaking, but ye heard not, and called you, but ye answered not; Therefore will I d unto this house, which is called by my name, wherei ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, an to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out al your brethren. I proceed to the

Fifth particular I mentioned, which is to consider by what means God is more especially provoked t deprive a people of the light of the gospel, and th means of salvation. By these two more especially By a general barrenness and unfruitfulness unde them; and by a general impiety and wickedness.

1. By a general barrenness and unfruitfulnes, un der the means and opportunities of salvation plenti fully afforded to us. This our Saviour represents t us in the parable of the husbandmen, which I menti oned before, who rendred no fruit of the vineyar let out to them, for which they are threatened t have the vineyard taken from them, and let out t other husbandmen, who will render the fruits of i in their seasons. And in the same chapter, Matth xxi. 19. we find our Saviour cursing the fig-tree which he saw in the way, because he *found nothin thereon but leaves only.* Leaves are the outwar shew and profession of religion; but if there be n fruit, we may justly fear a curse: for our Saviour di not curse the fig-tree for its own sake, but for ou example. *Sterilitas nostra in ficu vapulat;* Our bar renness is corrected and chastised in the curse whic he pronounced upon the fig-tree. To the same pur pose there is a remarkable parable of a barren fig tree, and of the husbandman's patient expectation t fruit from it, Luke xiii. 7, 8, 9. after three years wai ing. *Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Be hold these three years I come seeking fruit on th fig-tree, and find none; Cut it down, why cumbere it the ground? And he answering said unto him Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig abou it, and dung it; And if it bear fruit, well: and not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.* It is l

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rally true, that fruit may be expected from a fig-tree farthest the third year; and if in that time it do not ear, it is almost in vain to expect it: But our Saviour ntended by this parable to reprove the Jews, among hom he had taken so much pains for three years, nd was now upon his fourth, resolving with the utost patience to expect the fruit of repentance, and oedience to his doctrine, and then to leave them, and ithdraw that light from them which they had made use of: And yet after this, he continued his Apoles among them, who preached the doctrine of life nd salvation to them for many years, before he pushed their barrenness under all those means by taking way his gospel from them, and giving them up to ut r ruin and destruction.

2. Another and higher provocation of Almighty od to take away his gospel from a nation, is great nd general impiety and wickedness, an universal corption and depravation of manners. When the vineard which God hath planted with so much care, doth ot only not bring forth good grapes, but bring forth ild grapes, as it is in the parable of the Prophet Iiah, concerning the house of Israel; then God will reak down the hedge of it, and lay it waste; and *ill also command the clouds that they rain no rain pon it.* When no means will prevail upon a people bring them to goodness, God will then give over l care of them, and deprive them of the means hereby they should be made better. When they do ot only frustrate his expectation, but do quite conary to what he looked for, he will be no farther conrned for them. So we find in the application of that rable, Isa. v. 7. *For the vineyard of the Lord of osts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah is pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.* nd this we find under the gospel, Heb. vi. 7, 8. *or the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned*

burned. Briers and thorns are not mere unfruitfu
neſs under the goſpel, but contempt of it, and affron
ing it by our wicked lives. When infidelity and co
tempt of religion appear openly in a nation, and impi
ty and vice grow impudent and univerſal, even wh
the goſpel ſhineth in its cleareſt and ſtrongeſt ligh
and the wrath of God, not only in his word, but i
his providence, and *by terrible things in righteouſne*
is ſo plainly *revealed from heaven, againſt all ungodl*
neſs and unrighteouſneſs of men; when people a
taught their duty, and the true knowledge of God, b
will receive no inſtruction, but perſiſt in their lewd a
vicious courſes, and commit iniquity with greedineſ
this if any thing, is a juſt provocation of Almigh
God, to *remove his candleſtick from ſuch a nation*
this, and to leave them in darkneſs; ſince light ha
no other effect upon them, but to make them more wi
and extravagant. There remains only the

Sixth and *laſt* particular, which I mentioned,
be ſpoken to, namely, What is the way and mea
to prevent ſo diſmal a judgment, and to procure,
it may be, *a lengthening of our tranquillity*, and
longer enjoyment of the means and opportunities
grace and ſalvation. And our beſt direction in this ca
will be to follow the counſel which the Spirit giv
to the ſeven churches of Aſia, to prevent the rem
ving of their *candleſtick out of its place*, that is, th
being deprived of the light of the goſpel, which ſho
ſo clearly among them. *He then that hath an e*
let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the church.
To the church of Epheſus, Rev. ii. 5. *Remember fr*
whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the fi
works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and w
remove thy candleſtick out of its place, except thou r
pent. To the church of Smyrna, ver. 10. *Fear no*
of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer: Behold the de
ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that ye may be tri
and ye ſhall ſuffer tribulation ten days: Be thou faithf
unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
the church of Pergamus, ver. 16. *Repent, or elſe I w*
come unto thee quickly. To the church of Sard
ch

iap. iii. 2, 3. *Be watchful, and strengthen the things hich remain, that are ready to die: For I have not und thy works perfect before God. Remember there-re how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, nd repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will me on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what ur I will come upon thee.* To the church of La-dicea, ver. 19. *Be zealous therefore, and repent.*

You see what are the means prescribed by the Spirit f God, to prevent the removing of our *candlestick out f its place;* to be sensible of our great degeneracy om our primitive piety, and the strict practice of reli-on; and to exercise a deep repentance for it, and ef-ctually to reform, and do our first works. *Remem-r from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do y first works.* And then great vigilancy and watch-lness, that we be not surprised before we are vare: *Be watchful; for if thou shalt not watch, will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not ow what hour I will come upon thee.* Now watch-lness implies great sobriety and temperance, and is ually joined with fervent and earnest prayer; *Watch therefore, and pray always.* Next, to *hold fast e doctrine which we have received and heard, the ith which was once delivered to the saints,* as St. ude calls it, *Remember how thou hast received, and ard, and hold fast.* And *lastly*, Zeal for God's lory, and an undaunted resolution to adhere to it, otwithstanding all dangers and sufferings. *Be zea-us, fear none of these things which thou shalt suf-r; but be thou faithful unto the death.*

If we follow this counsel, we may hope, nay, we ay be assured that God will still continue to us the lessed means and opportunities of grace and salvati-n: that our *pastors shall not be removed into cor-ers, but our eyes shall still see our teachers;* that od will not let darkness come upon us; or if the light f the gospel should be obscured and eclipsed, that it ill be but for a little while, and will soonpass ver. But if we will not hearken and obey,

if

if we will not repent and *do our first works*, we have reason to apprehend, that God will come against us quickly, and *remove our candlestick out of its place*, and take away that light which we have abused, and carry it into some other quarter of the world; and as our Saviour threatens the Jews, that *the kingdom of God shall be taken from us, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it.*

I shall only add that counsel given by the Prophet Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar, and which is very proper for a people and nation, and likewise for particular persons, for the prevention of spiritual as well as temporal judgments, Dan. iv. 27. *Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* Nothing is so likely, not only to reconcile God to us, but to turn away his judgments from us, as repentance and reformation of our wicked lives, and the practice of alms and charity. *Alms shall deliver from death*, saith the wise man, speaking of the benefit that redounds to particular persons: And by parity of reason, the charity and alms of a great number may save a nation both from temporal and spiritual judgments; charity and alms to the poor, especially those that are poor and destitute, by *forsaking all for God and his truth.* And nothing gives greater hopes of God's mercy to us, than that general charitable disposition which appears among us.

What I have said, needs no long application; I shall therefore do it in very few words. This calls upon the whole nation, and every one of us, *to remember from whence we are fallen*, and *to repent, and do our first works;* and to endeavour to recover that ancient piety and virtue which flourished in the days of our forefathers, and was so great an ornament to our holy religion. Blessed be God, that by his goodness, and the protection of a gracious Prince, we still enjoy the blessed means and opportunities of grace and salvation: But if we be still unfruitful under them, and will not *walk in the light*, the just providence of

God

d may have a thousand ways to deprive us of it, l *to bring darkness upon us.*

And what I have said in general to the whole nation, l what our Saviour here says to the Jews, we may commodate every one to ourselves, *Yet a little while light is with us, let us walk in the light, while we ve it, lest darkness come upon us.* We know not w long the opportunity of life, as well as of grace, y be continued to us; they may be taken from us, we may be cut off from them.

The season of our solemn repentance is now ap- aching; let us improve it, as if it were to be our opportunity of making our peace with God: and us lose no time, lest we die in our delay, and in our urity we be destroyed.

will conclude with the earnest exhortation of the phet Jeremiah, chap. xiii. 16. *Give glory to the d your God,* that is, repent, *before he cause dark- , and before your feet stumble upon the dark moun- ns, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the dow of death, and make it gross darkness.* To ich I will only add the advice of our blessed Savi- , Luke xxi. 36. *Watch ye therefore, and pray al- ys, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all e things that shall come to pass, and to stand before Son of Man.*

SERMON CCXLIX.

The folly of hazarding eternal life fo temporal enjoyments.

MATTH. xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whe world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a m give in exchange for his soul?

THE great question that a wise man puts himself in any design or undertaking, is th What shall I be the better for it, if I obt what I seek for? If all things succeed according to r desire, what benefit or advantage will it be to me? if I gain in one respect, shall I not be as great, or greater loser in another? When all things are calc lated and cast up, what will be the foot of the accomp Upon the whole matter, and in the final issue and sult of things, what will be the gain or loss? For thou the advantage appear never so great in one respect, if this be over-balanced by a greater hazard and loss another kind, far more considerable; it is upon t whole matter a foolish bargain, and a wise man will meddle with it. And this is the question which our viour here puts, *What is a man profited?* &c.

For the understanding of which words, we must lo back to the verses immediately before, wherein our viour tells his followers, upon what terms they may his disciples, and list themselves in his service, ver. 25. *If any man will be my disciple, let him deny h self, and take up his cross, and follow me. Whosoe will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever lose his life for my sake, shall find it;* that is, who

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r by declining the profeſſion of the goſpel for fear of ſecution, ſhall hope to ſave this temporal life, ſhall : that which is infinitely more conſiderable, eternal : and whoever for my ſake, and the goſpel's, ſhall ooſe himſelf to perſecution and the loſs of this tem- al life, ſhall find a better life in lieu of it, ſhall at be made partaker of eternal life. And this certainly viſdom, not to loſe that which is more valuable, for purchaſing of that which is leſs conſiderable; *For at is a man profited?* &c.

What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, l loſe his own ſoul? Here our tranſlators have un- eſſarily changed the ſignification of the ſame word t was uſed before: for the word here tranſlated *l*, is the very ſame which is uſed for *life*, in the ſe before; and there is no reaſon to alter the ren- ing of it; for the ſenſe is very current thus: *Who- ver will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; and whoſoever 'll loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it. For what a man profited, if he gain the whole world and his life? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for life?*

This was a proverbial ſpeech uſed among the Jews, ſignify that men value life above any thing in this rld, and it ſeems to allude to that expreſſion in Job, *n for ſkin; and all that a man hath will he give his life;* that is, men will part with any thing in world to ſave their lives.

Now this proverbial ſentence which the Jews uſed ncerning this temporal life, our Saviour does very y apply to the purpoſe he was ſpeaking of, and ar- s *à fortiori* from this temporal life to eternal life. if we think all that we have well beſtowed to ran- n our lives, then much more ſhould we be willing to t with this mortal life; and all the enjoyments of it, purchaſe eternal life, which doth in true value more ceed this life, than this life doth any thing elſe in s world.

And that our Saviour doth apply this proverb of the s to a higher purpoſe, namely to eternal life, is plain

from what he adds in the verſe after the text, *For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works;* that is, there is another life after this, wherein men ſhall be happy or miſerable, according as they have behaved themſelves in this world, and then it will appear who have made the beſt bargain, and who at laſt will prove the greateſt gainers, they who by following me have hazarded this temporal life, and receiv in lieu of it life eternal; or they who by denying me have ſecured their temporal lives, but forfeited the eternal life and happineſs of the next world.

So that the meaning and force of our Saviour's argument is plainly this: What advantage would it be to any man, if he could gain the whole world, and ſhould be ruined for ever? or what would a man that has brought himſelf into this miſerable condition, give to redeem and reſcue himſelf out of it?

And that this is plainly our Saviour's meaning, will appear, if we conſider how St. Luke expreſſeth the ſame thing, Luke ix. 25. *What is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf, and be cast away?* So that the emphaſis and force of our Saviour's argument, is not to be laid upon the word *ſoul*, as our tranſlators ſeem to have laid it; for St. Luke hath omitted this word: but it lies in the application of this proverbial ſpeech, which the Jews uſed concerning this temporal life, to life eternal?

Having thus cleared the true meaning and intention of theſe words, I ſhall conſider in them what may be moſt uſeful for us to fix our thoughts and meditations upon.

In theſe words we have two caſes ſuppoſed, and a queſtion put upon each of them.

Firſt, Suppoſe a man ſhould gain the whole world and ruin himſelf for ever, what would be the advantage of it? *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf?*

Secondly, Suppoſe a man had made ſuch a bargain and undone himſelf for ever, to gain the world

hen he comes to be ſenſible of his folly, what would
: not give to undo this bargain? *What will a man*
ve in exchange for his ſoul? that is, to redeem and
cover what he hath loſt.

And indeed theſe queſtions carry their own an-
ver and reſolution in them. Suppoſe a man ſhould
ain the whole world, and ruin himſelf for ever,
hat advantage would it be to him? would it be a-
y? No, certainly very far from it; for the words
e a μείωσις, and ſignify more than they ſeem to ex-
eſs; *What is a man profited?* that is, he would be
far from being a gainer, that he would be a vaſt
ſer by it.

And ſuppoſe a man had made ſuch a bargain, had
us undone himſelf to gain the world, would he not
flect ſeverely upon his own folly afterwards? Yes
rtainly, he would give the whole world, if he had
to undo it again.

So that the ſenſe of theſe words may be reſolved in-
theſe two propoſitions:

Firſt, That it is a fooliſh bargain for a man *to loſe his*
wn ſoul, and forfeit his eternal happineſs upon any
rms, though it were *to gain the whole world.*

Secondly, That whoever makes this bargain, will
ie time or other ſadly rue it, and be ſenſible of the
onſtrous folly of it. *What would a man give in*
change for his ſoul? that is, what would he not
ve to be put in his former condition, and to be left
make a new choice?

Firſt, That it would be a moſt fooliſh bargain, for
man to purchaſe the whole world with the loſs of his
ul, and his eternal happineſs.

The folly of this one would think ſufficiently evi-
nt at firſt ſight; yet we ſee men every day guilty of
ſo that either they do not diſcern it, or they do
t conſider it; therefore, to make men ſenſible of
eir monſtrous folly herein, we will conſider theſe
vo things:

I. How inconſiderable the purchaſe is. And,

II. How great a price is paid for it. For that is a
oliſh bargain, when we pay a great deal too much

for a thing, a mighty price for that which is little worth.

I. The purchaſe is inconſiderable. Our Saviour here puts the caſe to the greateſt advantage on the purchaſer's ſide, and makes the very beſt of it; he ſuppoſeth the gain much greater than any man ever made, he puts a caſe next to an impoſſibillity, that *a man ſhall gain the whole world*, which no man ever did, or was in any probability of doing. Alexander bid faireſt for it, and becauſe he over-run a few great countries, is called *a conqueror of the world:* but let a man ſurvey the globe, and he will ſoon ſee how ſmall a part of the world he had maſtered; it was but inconſiderable in compariſon of the reſt of the then known world; and much leſs if we take in thoſe vaſt and ſpacious regions, which have ſince been diſcovered: ſo that if he had underſtood either the world, or himſelf better, he might have ſpared his crying for want of more to ſubdue. But ſuppoſe a man could *gain all the world*, and command all the conveniencies and pleaſures of it, yet all this, if it be duly weighed, would be found to be no great purchaſe, eſpecially if we conſider theſe three things

1. If we had it all, yet the great uncertainty of holding it, or any part of it.

2. The impoſſibility of uſing and enjoying it all.

3. If we had it, and could uſe it all, the improbability of being contented with it. If a man had the whole world, 'tis uncertain whether he could hold it, or any part of it for any time; if he ſhould hold it, it is impoſſible he ſhould uſe and enjoy it all; if he could uſe it, it is probable he would not be contented with it: and what a goodly purchaſe is this; when it is all of it uncertain; and the greateſt part of it uſeleſs to us; and when we have it, we are as far from ſatisfaction, as if we were without it? All theſe conſiderations muſt needs mightily ſink the value of this purchaſe, and take us off from our fondneſs of a ſmall part, when the whole is ſo inconſiderable.

1. If we had it all, the uncertainty of holding it, or any part of it. The very ſuppoſition of *gaining the world* doth imply, that it is loſt from thoſe that had

d it before; which shews the possession of these ngs to be uncertain, and that they are not sure to ntinue in the same hand. When Alexander con- ered Darius, and took his kingdoms, just so much Alexander got, Darius lost; so that if a man could n the whole world from those who are now the lords l possessors of it, the very gaining of it from others, st needs be a demonstration to him of the fickleness l uncertainty of these things.

No man is sure of any thing in this world for his , or for any considerable part of it; and if he were, no man is sure of his life for one moment. How y ways hath the providence of God to change the greatest prosperity of this world into the greatest mi- and sorrow, and in an instant to overturn the test fortune, to throw down the proudest aspirer, npoverish the wealthiest prince, and to make ex- ely miserable, the most happy man that ever was is world? This change of fortune may be made he rapine of our enemies, or the treachery of our ds; by a storm at sea, or a fire at land; by our folly, or by the malice of others, or by the imme- hand of God.

ay, all the outward circumstances of happiness continue firm and unshaken, and yet a man may xtremely miserable by the inward vexation and dis- nt of his own mind; and if riches and greatness, prosperity would stick by us, we ourselves are fic- nd uncertain. *Our life is a vapour* easily blown , and though it be the foundation of all other en- ents in this world, yet it is as frail and inconstant y of them; so that if a man could gain the whole d, yet this great purchase would be clogged with ible uncertainty, either of losing it, or leaving it; r of having these taken from us, or ourselves hed from them.

Suppose a man had gained the whole world, were sure to keep it for a considerable time, yet mpossible he should enjoy it all. Though no man ver had, yet it is possible he may have a title to hole world, and a great deal of care and trouble ure that against the violence and ambition of o-

thers;

others: but a title to a thing is one thing, and the re
al use of it another. There are a great many thing
in the world, of which no man ever yet understood th
true nature and proper use; to these a man may hav
a title, and be actually possest of them: yet no ma
can be said to enjoy any thing further than he unde
stands the nature and use of it. But suppose this gre
man had a mind and understanding vast and boundles
as his dominion and possessions are; yet he could en
joy but a very small part of what he possesseth: the
are millions in the world, that in despite of him, wou
share these things equally with him, equally, I say,
all the purposes of human life, and of temporal felicit
and enjoy as much as he.

It may perhaps give a man some imaginary ple
sure, to survey in his thoughts how much he hath t
command of: but when he hath done, he cannot t
what to do with the hundred thousand part of what
possesseth, he cannot so much as have the slight and tra
sitory pleasure of *beholding it with his eyes*, any othe
wise than in a chart or map, which every man else m
do as well as he: but as to all real benefits and adva
tages, he can enjoy but a very small part of the wor
according to the necessity and the capacity of a man

He hath indeed wherewithal to make himself m
soft and delicate, wherewith to surfeit sooner and
be sick oftner than other men; but whatever can r
nister to true pleasure and delight, and serve any
al occasions of nature, there are thousands in
world will enjoy as well as he. He may have the opp
tunity of cloying himself with the sight of more dish
and of being almost every day stifled in the crowd
a numerous train, and of doing every thing with
thousand eyes upon him; but he must of neces
want both the real pleasure and enjoyment of a gr
many things, which even a poorer man may ha
he can neither eat with that appetite, nor sleep w
that pleasure that a labouring man does. The consti
fulness both of his stomach and his table, make him
capable of ever having a feast; and the height
pro

sperity of his fortune keep him from having any nds; or which comes all to one, from knowing that hath any; for *that* no man can know, till the change his condition give him the opportunity to discern ween his friends and his flatterers.

So that if a man could *gain the whole world*, it uld be no such mighty purchase; and the very first ng such a man would do, if he were wise enough to trive his own happiness, would be to take so much himself, as would serve all the real uses and conve- ncies of human life, and to rid his hands of the rest, ast as he could. And who can think it reasonable, erly to desire and seek after that, which a wise man uld think it reasonable to part with if he had it?

3. If it were possible that one man could *gain*, and lly *use all the world*, it is a thousand to one this would find no great happiness and contentment in because we see in daily experience, that it is not increase of riches, or the accessions of honours, t give a man happiness and satisfaction; because does not spring from external enjoyments, but m the inward frame and disposition of a man's mind; that man who can govern his passions, and stint his res, will as soon find contentment in a moderate une, as in the revenues of a kingdom; and he that not do this, is not to be satisfied with abundance; ath an unnatural thirst, like that of a dropsy, which ooner quenched by abstinence than by drinking; the re he pours in, the more he is inflamed.

He that considers the world, may easily observe, t poverty and contentment do much oftner meet ether, than a great fortune and a satisfied mind. fulness is naturally uneasy, and men are many es in greater pain after a full meal, than before y sat down. The greatest enjoyments of this world they are *vanity*, so they are usually attended with *ation of spirit*.

God hath so contrived things, that ordinarily the asures of human life do consist more in hope than oyment; so that if a man had *gained all the world*,

one

one of the chief pleasures of life would be gone, b
cause there would be nothing more left for him
hope for in this world. For whatever happiness m
may fancy to themselves in things at a distance, the
is not a more melancholy condition, than to be at t
top of greatness, and to have nothing more left to
spire after; and he is a miserable man, whose desi
are not satisfied, and yet his hopes are at an end;
that if a man could do what Alexander thought he h
done, conquer the whole world, when that work w
over, he would in all probability do just as he did,
down and weep that there were nothing more left f
him to do. You see then what the purchase amou
to; suppose a man could *gain the whole world*,
would be as far from contentment, as he that posses
the least share and portion of it. Let us now consi
in the

II. Place, the price that is here supposed to be p
for it; the man *gains the whole world*, but *he los
his own soul*; that is, he ruins himself for ever;
deprives himself of a happiness infinitely greater th
this world can afford, and that not for a little whi
but for ever; and he exposeth himself to a misery
great, as no man that considers it, would endure
one hour, for all the pleasures and enjoyments of t
world.

And now the purchase may be allowed to be v
considerable, when so intolerable a price is paid for
when for the present enjoyment of so short and imp
fect a felicity, as this world can afford, a man h
quitted his interest in a blessed immortality, and ch
to dwell with everlasting burnings. I am really afr
to tell you how much misery is involved in these
words of *losing a man's soul*; the consideration of i
so full of horror, that I am loth to enter into it.

The loss is great and irreparable; great beyond
imagination; for he that loseth his soul, loseth himse
not his being, that would be a happy loss indeed,
that still remains to be a foundation of misery, and
scene of perpetual woe and discontent. The loss of

implies the loſs of God, and of happineſs, and hat is deſirable and delightful to a reaſonable crea- ; nay, it does not only ſignify the privation of pineſs, but the infliction of the greateſt miſery and ient. Could I repreſent to you thoſe diſmal pri- , into which wicked and impure ſouls are thruſt, the miſeries they there endure, without the leaſt k of comfort, or glimmering of hope, how they are paſſed about with woe, and ly wallowing in the es, how they ſigh and groan under the intolerable th of God, the inſolent ſcorn and cruelty of devils, ſevere laſhes, and raging anguiſh, and fearful de- of their own minds, without intermiſſion, without , without hope; could I repreſent theſe things to you were not able to hear the leaſt part of what e miſerable wretches are condemned for ever to ire.

nd the loſs is not only vaſt but irreparable; the once loſt, is loſt for ever. We may part with ſouls to gain the world; but if we would give a ſand worlds, we cannot regain our ſouls. *The mption of a ſoul is precious, and ceaſeth for ever.* loſs of it is ſo great, that nothing can recom- e it; and ſo fatal, that it is never to be repaired. happineſs that the man parts withal, who makes mad bargain, is ſo vaſt, both in reſpect of the ee and duration of it, that nothing can make a- ds for ſo great a loſs; and the ſufferings which man expoſeth himſelf to are ſo dreadful, *that all kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,* can o temptation to any man to run the hazard of en- ng them. Epicurus, who very well underſtood the s of pain and pleaſure, is peremptory in this aſſer- , that it is a great folly for any man to purchaſe ſure with equal pain; becauſe there is nothing got t, they balance one another: it muſt ſurely then be ange madneſs in any man, for the tranſitory delights his world, to forfeit the eternal pleaſures of God's ence, and for the joys of a moment to live in pain ever.

nd is it not then a prodigious folly that poſſeſſeth

ſin-

ſinners, who can be contented to venture their ſou
and their happineſs, their immortal ſouls, and th
everlaſting happineſs, upon ſuch cheap and eaſy term
The folly is great, if we only conſider what an uneq
price they pay for ſo ſmall a purchaſe: but it is mu
greater, if we regard the fooliſh order of their choic
firſt to pleaſe themſelves with a ſhadow and appearan
of happineſs, and then to be really miſerable afterwa
If the happineſs were true and real, it were an impr
dent method. As if a man ſhould chooſe to enjoy
great eſtate for a few days, and to be extremely po
the remaining part of his life. If there were any n
ceſſity of making ſo unequal a bargain, ſurely a m
would reſerve the beſt condition to the laſt; for prec
dent ſufferings and trouble do mightily recommend t
pleaſures that are to enſue, and render them more tas
ful than they would otherwiſe have been; whereas t
greateſt heightening of miſery, the ſaddeſt aggravati
of an unhappy condition, is to fall into it from the hei
of a proſperous fortune. It is comfortable for a m
to come out of the cold, to a warm fire; but if a m
in a great heat ſhall leap into the cold water, it w
ſtrike him to the heart. Such is the fond choice of eve
ſinner, to paſs immediately out of a ſtate of the great
ſenſual pleaſure, into the moſt quick and ſenſible t
ments. This our Saviour fully repreſents to us in t
parable of Lazarus and the rich man, Luke xvi. 2
where Abraham is brought in upbraiding the rich m
for his fooliſh and prepoſterous choice, *Son, remem*
that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, a
likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comfort
and thou art tormented. This made a vaſt differenc
the rich man received his good things firſt, and th
was tormented: Lazarus firſt received his evil thin
and then was comforted; and how comfortable w
Abraham's boſom to him, after he had lain in ſo mu
miſery and want at the rich man's gate? And on
other hand, how grievous muſt pain and torment be
that man who never was acquainted with any thing b
eaſe and pleaſure?

I

But it may be all this is but a ſuppoſition; and re is no man ſo forſaken of his reaſon, and of com- n prudence, as to make ſuch a bargain. Surely man that is reaſonable, no man that conſiders the erence between time and eternity, between a few rs and everlaſting ages, can be perſuaded to forego happineſs of heaven, and *to fall into the hands of living God*, no not if the whole world were of- ed to him for conſideration. Indeed theſe large ms of *gaining the whole world*, are but a ſuppoſition, ich our Saviour makes to ſhew the unreaſonable- s of moſt mens choice; but in truth, and in effect, caſe of ſinners is much worſe. Among all thoſe nerous troops of ſinners that go to hell in ſuch ongs, there is not one of them that ever made ſelf ſo wiſe a bargain; and though *the whole world* but a pitiful price to be paid for a man's ſoul, ſo ſtupid are the greateſt part of thoſe creatures om we call reaſonable, as to ſtrike up a bargain little ſcraps and portions of this world. There are a few who ſtand upon ſuch terms as this world ks conſiderable. They are a ſort of more gene- s ſinners that damn themſelves for a crown and a gdom, that will not do an act of injuſtice upon er terms than a manor or a lordſhip. Alas! moſt barter away their ſouls for a trifle, and ſet their nal happineſs to ſale for a thing of nought. How ny are there, who, to gratify their covetouſneſs, luſt, or revenge, or any other inordinate paſſion, content to hazard the loſs of their ſouls? who go to hell, rather than be out of the faſhion? damn themſelves out of mere compliment to the pany, and cannot be perſuaded to leave off t fooliſh cuſtom of ſwearing, which hath nei- pleaſure nor profit in it, no not to ſave their s?

Thus it is in truth, and the ſuppoſition which our iour here makes of *gaining the whole world*, is a feigned caſe; the market was never yet ſo high, ſinner had ever yet ſo great a value for his im- tal ſoul, as to ſtand upon ſuch terms; alas! in- tely leſs than *the whole world*, a little ſordid gain,

the gratifying of a vile luſt, or an unmanly paſſion the ſmile or the frown of a great man, the fear of ſingularity, and of diſpleaſing the company; theſe and ſuch like mean and pitiful conſiderations tempt thouſands every day to make away themſelves, and to be undone for ever.

I have done with the firſt thing, the folly of the adventure, *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* I proceed to the

Second, The ſevere reflection men will make upon themſelves for this their folly. What would they not give to undo this fooliſh bargain? *What will a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* to redeem and recover ſo great a loſs? And ſooner or later every man will be ſenſible of this folly; probably in this world, but moſt certainly in the other; and then, *What would a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

Whenever the ſinner comes to reflect upon himſelf, and to conſider ſeriouſly what he hath done, with what indignation will he look upon himſelf, and cenſure his own folly? Like a man who in a drunken fit hath paſſed away his eſtate for a trifling conſideration; the next morning when he is ſober, and come to himſelf, and finds himſelf a beggar, how does he rate himſelf for being ſuch a beaſt and a fool, as to do that in a blind and raſh heat, which he will have cauſe to repent as long as he hath a day to live?

Or if the ſinner be able to keep off theſe thoughts while he is well and in health, yet when he is ſeized upon by ſickneſs, and comes to lie upon a deathbed, he will then in all probability be ſadly ſenſible what a fool he hath been. When he ſhall ſtand upon the confines of eternity, and look back upon this world, which, how conſiderable ſoever it once appeared to him, can ſignify nothing now that he is to leave it; when he conſiders how much he hath parted with, and is now like to loſe for ever, for the falſe and treacherous advantages of a vain world, he will then need no body to convince him of his error, to aggravate his folly to him; he now repents heartily

the

t he was not wiſer, and wiſheth for nothing ſo much,
hat God would grant him time to revoke and undo
fooliſh bargain; and how glad would he be to
: the world back again to ſecure his ſoul, and to
ow up all his unjuſt gain, and the advantages he
indirectly made by fraud, or violence? This, I
bt not, is the ſenſe of moſt men, when they come
leave the world: and if it be true then, it is ſo
. Let us then, while the opportunities of life are
re us, ſuffer theſe conſiderations to take place and
ail, which otherwiſe would wound us to the heart,
fill our ſouls with anguiſh and deſpair in a dying
.

the folly and ſtupidity of men! to be ſo tranſ-
ed with preſent and ſenſible things, as to have
:onſideration of our future ſtate, no pity for our
, no ſenſe of our everlaſting abode in another
d; to be ſo blinded by ſenſe, ſo bribed by the
ures of ſin, which are but for a moment, as to
t the happineſs of all eternity! When the pleaſure
ſt and gone, and the dear price comes to be paid
n, and our ſouls are leaving this world, and going
ake poſſeſſion of that everlaſting inheritance of
e and ſorrow, of tribulation and anguiſh, which
ave purchaſed to ourſelves by our own folly,
ſhall we then repent ourſelves of that bargain
we have ſo raſhly made, but can never be releaſed
!

is our lot, who have the ſouls of men commit-
:o our charge, to ſee many of theſe ſad ſights.
God! what confuſion have I ſometimes ſeen
e face of a dying man! What terrors on every
what reſtleſs working, and violent throws of a
conſcience! And how are we tempted, (who
only are ſent for too late to miniſter comfort
h perſons), I ſay, how are we tempted to ſow
vs under their uneaſy heads; and out of very
nd compaſſion are afraid to ſay the worſt, and
rieved at our very hearts to ſpeak thoſe ſad
which yet are fit for them to hear! It is very
us to ſee a man in the paroxyſms of a fever,
the extreme torment of the ſtone, or in the very

agony of death: But the saddest sight in the world i the anguish of a dying sinner: nothing looks so ghastly as the final despair of a wicked man, when God is takin away his soul.

But whatever sense men have of these things, whe they come to lie upon a sick-bed; every sinner wi most certainly be convinced, when he comes into an other world. We shall then have nothing to d vert us from these thoughts; we shall feel that whic will be a sensible demonstration to us of our ow folly. Then men will curse those false and flatte ing pleasures which have cheated them into so mu misery; but their own folly most of all, for bein so easily abused. Then would they give ten tho sand worlds, if they had them, to recover the o portunity of a new choice; but it cannot be: th parted with their souls once at a cheap rate; but price will then be accepted for the redemption them.

O that men would consider these things in time, t they are plain and evident to those that will consi them. Our Saviour tells us, we have so much eviden that he that will not be convinced by it, *would not persuaded, though one rose from the dead to testify u him.* We *have Moses and the prophets*; nay, we h the Son of God himself, who hath revealed these thi to us; and if we would but attend to them, a suffer them to sink into our hearts, nothing in this wo could be a temptation to any of us to do any thi or to neglect any thing, to the prejudice of our imm tal souls.

Therefore, to conclude this discourse, whenever, any present pleasure or advantage, we are tempte provoke God, and to destroy our own souls; le consider what an unequal bargain we make, how li we purchase, and how much we part withal. Wh ever we are solicited to any sin, let us take tim answer the question here in the text, *What is a profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose own soul?* &c.

SE

SERMON CCL.

ne reasonableness of fearing God more than man.

LUKE xii. 4. 5.

nd I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.

The first sermon on this text.

THE occasion of these words will more clearly appear, if we compare this discourse of our Saviour's, as it is here recorded by St ke, with that fuller account of it given by St tthew, chap. x. where our Saviour having called disciples together, and given them their commis-, and the rules and instructions they were to ob-e in the execution of it, he warns them likewise the opposition they would meet with, and the per-ition that would attend them in the faithful discharge their duty; nevertheless he bids them take cou-e, and boldly to proclaim the gospel, notwith-nding all the danger and hazard it would expose m to: but because this is very unwelcome and ter-e to flesh and blood, to encounter the rage and e of men; therefore to strengthen their resolution, l to fortify their spirits against these fears, he tells m of something much more terrible than the wrath rage of men, *viz.* the anger and displeasure of d, that so he might chase away this lesser fear

by a greater: *I say unto you, my friends, Be not a fraid,* &c.

The words are sufficiently plain, and need no ex plication; only before I come to the main propositio which is contained in them, I shall take notice of the two important doctrines which are supposed in the text the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection the body.

First, The immortality of the soul, which is principle of natural religion, and not any where, tha I know of, expressly asserted in scripture; nor nee it be so, being to be known by natural light, witho divine revelation: but divine revelation did always sup pose it, and take it for granted, as one of the founda tions of religion. And I the rather take notice of here, because I do not know any text from which may be more immediately inferred, than from the words of our Saviour, which necessarily imply the two things.

1. That the soul is not obnoxious to death, as th body is. *Fear not him that can kill the body, but aft that hath no more that he can do;* which St Matthe expresseth, *cannot kill the soul.*

2. That the soul remains after the death of the bod *Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to ca into hell.*

Secondly, Another doctrine implied in these word is that of the resurrection of the body; which is doctrine of pure revelation, and most clearly a expressly revealed in the New Testament; and some sort before to the Jews, who did generally b lieve it before our Saviour's coming, excepting th sect of the Sadducees. This is supposed in the verse, *But fear him, who, after he hath kill hath power to cast into hell*; not only the soul, b also to raise up the body which is killed, and torment it in hell; for so St Matthew hath it e pressly, *But fear him that can destroy both body a soul in hell.* Now, the body, so long as it is dea is devoid of sense, and so incapable of torment, t it be raised to life again. These being suppose

I come to the main obſervation contained in the words:

That God is infinitely more to be dreaded than men.

The words indeed ſeem to reach farther, and to be an abſolute prohibition of the fear of men; but it is an Hebrew phraſe and manner of ſpeaking, when two things are oppoſed, to expreſs many times thoſe things abſolutely, which are to be underſtood comparatively; as John vi. 27. *Labour not for the meat which periſheth; but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life;* that is, not ſo much for things temporal, as things eternal, incomparably more for the one than the other. So when our Saviour ſays, *Fear not them that can kill the body;* that is, fear not men ſo much as God, fear him infinitely more. 'Tis very lawful for us to fear men, and to ſtand in awe of their power, becauſe they can kill the body, and death is terrible; but when the power of man comes in competition with omnipotency, and what man can do to the body in this world, with what God can do to the body and ſoul in the other; there is no compariſon between the terror of the one and the other.

The truth of this will appear, by comparing theſe two objects of fear together, God and man. Fear is a paſſion which is moſt deeply rooted in our nature, and flows immediately from that principle of ſelf-preſervation which is planted in every man's nature. We have a natural dread and horror for every thing that may hurt us, and endanger our being and happineſs: Now, the greateſt danger is always from the greateſt power; ſo that to make good the truth of this obſervation, we need do no more but to compare the power of men and God, and the effects of both, and then to calculate the difference; and if there appear to be a vaſt and infinite difference between them, it will be evident that God is infinitely more to be dreaded than men.

Firſt, We will conſider the power of man, and what it is he can do; or rather his impotency, or what he cannot do.

Secondly,

Secondly, How much the power of God exceeds the power of men, and what he can do more.

First, We will consider the power of man, and what it is he can do; which our Saviour expresseth in these words, *Be not afraid of them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.* Which signifies in general, that the power of man is finite and limited, and circumscribed within certain bounds, beyond which it cannot go; something it can do, but not much; it can hurt the body, yea and take away our life; *it can kill the body,* hither it can go, and no farther.

More particularly, in these words you have man's power, what he can do; and his impotency, what he can but do, the limits and bounds of his power.

I. The power of men, and what they can do; they *can kill the body,* and take away our lives; which includes a power of doing whatever is less. All those evils and persecutions which fall short of death, these they can inflict upon us, they can *revile us, and speak all manner of evil against us*; they can *persecute us from one city to another, and bring us before councils, and scourge us in their synagogues*; they can *spoil us of our goods, and deprive us of our liberty*; they can exercise us with *with bonds and imprisonments, with cruel mockings and scourgings, with hunger and thirst, with cold and nakedness*; they can many ways afflict and torment us, and at last they can put us to death. All this they can do by the permission of God; here is the sum of their power; give them all advantages, let them be united and combined together Our Saviour puts it in the plural number, *Fear not them;* and let them be backed with human authority, which our Saviour supposeth, when he speaks of bringing his disciples *before kings and governors.* Thus much their power amounts to.

II. We will consider the impotency of men, which will appear in these two particulars.

1. That they cannot do this without the divine permission.

2. That if they be permitted to do their worst, they

they can but do this; *after that, they have no more that they can do.*

1. They cannot do this without the divine permission. The devil, though he hath a greater natural power than men, yet he could not touch Job, either in his substance or his body, without God's leave and permission. Men are apt to arrogate to themselves a great deal of power, forgetting whence they derive it, and on whom it depends. *Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?* said Pilate to our Saviour: but he tells him, *Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above,* John xix. 10. 11. All the power that men have, they have it from God, and he can check and countermand it when he pleaseth; he can *restrain the rage of men, and put a hook in their nostrils;* he can *still the noise of the sea, and the tumult of the people.*

God's providence is continually vigilant over us, and unless it seem good to the divine wisdom to permit men, they cannot touch or hurt us. It is added immediately after the text, that the providence of God extends to creatures much less considerable than we are, and to the most inconsiderable things that belong to us: *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and yet not one of them is forgotten before God, or falls to the ground without the will of our Father; yea, the very hairs of our head, are they not all numbered?* Much more is the providence of God concerned in our lives, and the more considerable accidents and events which befal us: we are always under God's eye and care, and no man can do us the least hurt without his permission.

2. If men be permitted to do their worst, they can do but this; *they can* but *kill the body, after that they have no more that they can do.* Now, this implies several limitations of mens power, and abatements of the terror of it.

1. *They can but kill the body;* that is, they can only injure the worst and least considerable part of us. The power of the devil reacheth no farther than this; this was the worst mischief his malice could devise to do

to

to Job, *to touch his bone and his flesh*, and to take away his life; and all that the fury and rage of man can do, is to wound these vile bodies, and to spurn down these *houses of clay, whose foundations are* already *in the dust*. But the man's soul, which is himself, that they cannot touch; though they may pierce and break the cabinet, yet they cannot seize the jewel that is in it, and get that into their power and possession; when they have broken open this cage, *our soul will escape as a bird to his mountain*. Men may invent several instruments to torture and afflict the body; but no weapon can be formed against the soul, that can touch it, or do it harm.

2. When they have killed the body, by doing this, they do but prevent nature a little, they do but antedate an evil a few moments, and bring our fears upon us a little sooner; they kill that which must die within a few days, though they should let it alone; they do but cut asunder that thread which would shortly break of itself, by its own weakness and rottenness; so that, as the lepers reasoned, when the famine was in Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 3. 4. *Why sit we here until we die? If we say, we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die*; so we may reason in this case: Why should we so much desire to sit still till we die? if men persecute us, and do their worst, we shall die; and if they do not, however we shall die; therefore let not the fear of any danger from men make us to forget our duty to God, *for if they kill us, we shall but die*.

3. *They can* but *kill the body*; and what argument of power is this, to be able to kill that which is mortal? as if you should say, they can break a glass, they can throw down that which is falling. This is no such wonderful effect of power, to be able to do that, which almost every thing can do, which the least thing in the world, which the poorest creature can do; a pin, or a thorn, or a grape-stone; there is

; hardly any thing in the whole creation ſo inconſi-erable, but that it can do this which men are apt o boaſt of, as ſo great an evidence of their power. Ve are frail creatures, and it is no mere melancholy onceit that we are made of glaſs, and as we paſs rough the world are liable to be broken in pieces y the juſtle of a thouſand accidents; every thing n lie in wait for us, and lurk privily for our lives. len think it ſuch an act of power to kill a man; whereas othing is ſo eaſy. A man may be killed by another's indneſs, as ſoon as by thy hatred; by his own exceſſive ove, or joy, or hope, as well as by thy malice; ſo that is no ſuch inſtance and argument of power, *to be able kill the body.*

4. The killing of the body does not neceſſarily ſig-fy any great miſchief or harm in the iſſue and e-nt. *They can kill the body,* that is, they can knock f our fetters, and open the priſon-doors, and ſet us liberty; they can put us out of pain, thruſt us out an uneaſy world, put an end to our ſins and ſor-ws, to our miſery and fears; they can *give the eary reſt,* and ſend us thither where we would be, it are loath to venture to go; they can haſten our ppineſs, and make way for the more ſpeedy ac-mpliſhment of our deſires, and diſpatch us to hea-n ſooner than otherwiſe we ſhould get thither; they n kill us in the cauſe of God, and in the diſcharge our duty; that is, they can add to our happineſs, d brighten our crown, and increaſe the weight of our ory.

5. *They can* but *kill the body;* when they have done at, they may give over, *here their proud waves* muſt p; here their cruelty and malice, their power and it muſt terminate, for they can reach no farther, hen they have done all they can, they cannot anni-late us, they cannot make an utter end of us. As r the ſoul, they cannot come at *that* to do it any harm; ither the axe, nor the ſword, nor the ſpear, nor the il, nor any other inſtrument, can wound or pierce : and as for the body, though they wound it, and uiſe it, and mangle it, yet they cannot turn it into thing; though they may baniſh life from it, and make

make it a vile and loathsome carcase, yet they cannot command it out of being, it will still maintain itself under one form or other, and after it is killed, defy any thing more that can be done to it.

6. *They can* but *kill the body*, they cannot do the least harm to the soul, much less can they annihilate it and make it cease to be; they cannot torment it, they cannot with all their instruments of cruelty reach and touch the spirit of a man; they cannot throw stings into the conscience, and fill our minds with anguish and horror; nor can they make us torment ourselves by the racking of our own thoughts, they cannot create guilt in our minds, nor animate against us that never-dying worm, nor cast despairing thoughts, nor cause self-condemning and furious reflections in our minds, nothing of all this are they able to do.

7. and *lastly*, *They can* but *kill the body*, that is, they can but inflict temporal misery upon us. Their power, as it is but small, so it is of a short continuance, it reacheth no farther than this life, it is confined to this world; so that what mischief men would do to us, they must do it quickly, *while we are in the way*. There is no plot, nor device, nor cruelty, can be practised upon us *in the grave*, *whither we are going*. They cannot slay the dead, nor can their malice overtake those that are gone down into the pit; the longest arm, and the most inveterate hatred, cannot reach those that are got out of the land of the living. Our most powerful and deadly enemies cannot follow us beyond the grave, and pursue us into the other world. Thus Job elegantly describes the happy state of the dead, that they are out of the reach of all evil and disquiet, Job iii. 17. 18. 19. speaking of the grave, *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master.* Thus you see what the power of man is, and what the effects of it, what is the worst that he can do to us; and consequently how much he is to be feared and regarded. I proceed to the

Second

Second thing I propounded to ſpeak to, namely, w much the power of God exceeds the power of an; which our Saviour declares in theſe words, *ho, after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell.* Which in general ſignifies, that his power is in-ite and unlimited. God cannot only do what man n do, but infinitely more; his power is not con-ed to the body, but he hath power over the ſpirit; cannot only make body and ſoul miſerable in this orld, but in the other; not only for a time, but to l eternity.

More particularly in theſe words you have implied l thoſe advantages which the power of God hath ove the power of man. Not to inſiſt upon that, ich yet the text takes notice of, that God can do l that man can do; *he can kill the body*, which is plied in theſe words, *after he hath killed.* He can aſt our reputation, and ruin our eſtate, and afflict r bodies with the ſharpeſt pains, and ſmite us with ath. And God doth all that with eaſe, which men ny times do with great labour and endeavour; ey are glad to uſe the utmoſt of their wit and power, d contrivance to do us miſchief; but God can do l things by a word; if he do but ſpeak, judgments me: we are but a little duſt, and the leaſt breath God can diſſipate us; he hath all creatures at his mmand, ready to execute his will. So that whatever an, or any creature can do, that God can; and in-itely more; and this is that which I ſhall briefly en to you, wherein the power of God doth ex-ed the power of man, in theſe following particulars.

1. God's power is abſolute and independent upon y other; not ſubject to be at any time checked and ntrolled by a ſuperior power, becauſe there is none eater, none above it. *There is a higher than the gheſt* upon earth, and one that may ſay to the eateſt and proudeſt of the ſons of men, *What ſt thou?* God can forbid any man to execute his rpoſe, when he is moſt firmly reſolved and deter-ined; but when he hath a mind to manifeſt his ower, he needeth not aſk any man's leave. *Fear*

him that hath power, ἐξουσίαν ἔχοντα, *that hath authority*; he hath an independent power and a sovereign right over the lives of men, because they are all his creatures, and when he will put forth his power, there is none can resist or challenge him. God did once force this acknowledgment from one of the greatest and proudest kings of the earth, Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 35. *He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can say unto him, What dost thou?*

2. His power reacheth to the soul as well as the body. He can annihilate soul and body. He that brought all things into being by his word, can with as much ease make them vanish into nothing: as he *spake the word, and they were made*; so *he* can *command, and they shall not be.* By the least breath of his mouth he can turn us into nothing; nay, upon the very withdrawing of those influences of his power and goodness, whereby we are maintained and supported in being, our bodies would vanish and *flee away like a shadow, and our spirits also would fail before him, and the souls which he hath made.*

And as he can annihilate the souls of men if he please, so he can torment them. He that made our souls, and can make them happy, can likewise make them miserable; for he is a spirit, and hath power over ours; he can *shoot his arrows* into them, and make *them stick fast* there; he can wound our souls with invisible darts, and fill our spirits which secret anguish and amazement. When he sends a sword without to destroy our bodies, he can send terrors within to torment our minds; he can *distract us with terrors*, as David speaks, Psal. lxxxviii. 15. nay, he can make us a terror to ourselves, and by letting loose our thoughts upon us, can make us more miserable, than all the tyrants in the world can do, by the most exquisite torments, and that in this life, as we see in the instance of Francis Spira. When the *Father of spirits* will take us under correction, he can chastise us to purpose, and make our own guilty consciences to sting and lash us, and our minds to tor-

ture

re themſelves by furious reflections upon themves. All this God can do in this life.

3. In the other world he can raiſe our bodies a-in, and reunite them to our ſouls, and caſt them to hell, and torment them there. This is that hich St Matthew calls *deſtroying body and ſoul in ll.* And what the miſery of that ſtate ſhall be, the ripture in the general gives us an account, deribing it to us by the greateſt anguiſh, and the moſt arp and ſenſible bodily torments, by *the worm that s not*, that is, that guilt which ſhall eternally gnaw e conſciences of ſinners; and by the *fire which not quenched*, that is, the everlaſting pains of the dy.

In the other world God will raiſe the bodies of icked men, and reunite them to their ſouls, and ſt them together into hell, to be tormented there; d this is that which is called *the ſecond death.* And tortured perſons, when they are taken off the rack, ve their joints new ſet, to be new racked again; ſo e bodies of wicked men ſhall be raiſed to a new e, that they may be capable of new pains.

This ſtate of miſerable men is ſet forth to us by the oſt ſharp pains and ſenſible torments; by the pain burning, Matth. xxv. 41. *Depart ye curſed into erlaſting fire.* The rich man in the parable cried t, that he was *tormented in flames;* and in the Relation, the wicked are ſaid *to be caſt into a lake of e and brimſtone.* Fire is the moſt active thing in ture, and brimſtone the moſt combuſtible, to ſhew w quick and ſharp the torment of ſinners ſhall be; d it ſhall be univerſal, they ſhall be *caſt into the lake,* eir torments ſhall be ſharp as that of burning, d as univerſal as if they were drowned in flames. id to ſhew how great a ſenſe they ſhall have of theſe ferings, the ſcripture deſcribes thoſe who are conmned to theſe hideous pains, lamenting and wringg their hands, and *gnaſhing their teeth* for very guiſh: Matth. xxiv. 51. *There ſhall be wailg and gnaſhing of teeth.* Thus the ſcripture repreits to us the diſmal ſtate of the damned, poſſibly ter this ſenſible manner, that it may accommodate

things to our capacity: but to be sure if these be not the very torments of hell, they shall be every whit as dreadful, as great as the terrors of God's wrath, which ill men have laid up in store for themselves, can afford: and very probably they are of that nature, and so great as not to be capable of being fully described by any thing that we are now acquainted withal: for *who knows the power of God's anger?* Who can imagine the worst that omnipotent justice can do to sinners? As the glory of heaven and joys of God's presence are now inexplicable to us, so likewise are the torments of hell and the miseries of the damned. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, or have entered into the heart of men,* those dreadful things which *God hath laid up* for them that hate him.

4. Which is the most dreadful consideration of all, God can punish for ever. The wrath of man is but a blast, a storm that is soon over: all misery and torments that men can inflict, expire with this life; but the miserable effects of the divine displeasure extend themselves to all eternity. For this reason the judgment of God is called an *eternal judgment,* Heb. vi. 2. because the sentence which shall then be passed upon men, shall assign them to an eternal state; and the punishment that in pursuance of this sentence shall be inflicted upon sinners, is called *an everlasting punishment,* Matth. xxv. 46. And the instruments of their torment are said to be *everlasting,* Matth. xxv. 41. it is called *everlasting fire.* And Mark ix. 44. 48. you have it there three times repeated, *Where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. The smoke of the bottomless pit* is said *to ascend for ever and ever,* Rev. xiv. 5.; and Rev. xx. 10. it is said, that *the wicked shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever,* without intermission, and without end.

It must needs be then, as the Apostle says, Heb. x. 31. *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,* that is, the God that lives for ever, because he that lives for ever, can punish for ever. And this is that which makes the great difference between the

effects

ects of the wrath of man, and the displeasure of od; the wrath of man, and the effects of it, are t for a moment; but the effects of God's displeasure tend themselves to all eternity.

By these particulars, which I have briefly gone er, you may see, who is the great object of our ar, and when you have calculated the difference tween God and man, you will find that there is no oportion between the impotency of man, and the nipotency of God; between those evils that men n inflict upon us, and *the terrors of the Lord*; and nsequently what great reason we have to be raid of offending God, and transgressing our duty any kind, to avoid any temporal danger and in- nvenience. But I shall not now enter upon the plication of this serious and weighty argument.

SERMON CCLI.

he reasonableness of fearing God more than man.

LUKE xii. 4. 5.

nd I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: Yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

The second sermon on this text.

Proceed now to apply this serious and weighty argument, and to draw some useful inferences om it.

I. That religion doth not design to annihilate nd root out our passions, but regulate and govern em; it does not wholly forbid and condemn them,

but determines them to their proper objects, and appoints them their measures and proportions; it does not intend to extirpate our affections, but to exercise and employ them aright, and to keep them within bounds. Religion does not aim to extirpate our love, and joy, and hope, and fear, but to purify and direct them, telling us how we should love God with the highest and most intense degree of affection, as the supreme Good deserves, *with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our minds, and with all our strength*; and other things only in subordination to him. Religion refines our joy and delight from the dregs of sensual pleasure, raising them to better objects, requiring us to *rejoice in the Lord evermore*, and *to rejoice that our names are written in heaven:* it raiseth our hopes above the favour of men, and tells us whom we should fear above all, the great and terrible God, whose power is infinitely above the power of men. Now, that which propounds objects to our passions, and sets bounds to them, did never intend the utter extirpation of them; but this religion doth.

II. We may infer likewise from hence, that it is not against the genius of true religion, to urge men with arguments of fear. No man can imagine there would have been so many fearful threatenings in scripture, and especially in the gospel, if it had not been intended that they should have some effect and influence upon us. Some look upon all arguments of fear as legal, and *gendering to bondage*, as contrary to the genuine spirit and temper of the gospel; and look upon preachers, who urge men with considerations, taken from the justice of God, and *the terrors of the Lord*, as of an unevangelical spirit, as the *children of the bond-woman, and not of the free*; as those who would bring men back again to *mount Sinai*, to *thunder and lightning*, to *blackness, and darkness, and tempest*. But will such men allow our Saviour and his apostles to have been evangelical preachers? If so, it is not contrary to the gospel to use arguments of terror; they thought them very proper to deter men from sin, and to bring them to repentance, Acts xvii. 30. 31. *But*

now

w commandeth all men every where to repent; be-uſe he hath apointed a day, in the which he will dge the word in righteouſneſs. And the ſame apoſtle lls us, that one principal thing which made the go-el ſo powerful for the ſalvation of men, was the rrible threatenings of it, becauſe *therein the wrath f God is revealed from heaven, againſt all ungodli-eſs and unrighteouſneſs of men,* Rom. i. 16. And Cor. v. 10. the Apoſtle puts Chriſtians in mind of e judgment of Chriſt, *We muſt all ſtand before the dgment-ſeat of Chriſt.* And leſt any ſhould doubt hether this were a proper argument to work upon hriſtians under the goſpel, he tells us, that he men-oned it for this very purpoſe, ver. 11. *Knowing erefore the terrors of the Lord, we perſuade men.*

Some are ſo tender that they cannot bear any o-ier arguments but ſuch as are taken from the free race of God, and the free love of Chriſt. If we ention to them the wrath of God, and the tor-ents of hell, we grate upon them: but if we con-der the primitive preaching of Chriſt and his a-oſtles, and will be concluded by their pattern, we uſt allow the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of theſe argu-ents.

And indeed, if we conſider the nature and reaſon f things, nothing is more apt to work upon ſinners, han arguments of fear. Hence it is that the wiſdom f mankind hath thought fit to ſecure the obſervance f human laws by the fear of puniſhment. Fear is eeply rooted in our nature, and immediately flows rom that principle of ſelf-preſervation with is plant-d in every man; it is the moſt wakeful paſſion n the ſoul of man, and ſo ſoon as any thing that is readful and terrible is preſented to us, it alarms us o flee from it: And this paſſion doth naturally ſpring p in our minds from the apprehenſion of a Deity, ecauſe the notion of a God doth include in it power nd juſtice, both which are terrible to guilty crea-tures; ſo that fear is intimate to our being, and God ath hid in every man's conſcience a ſecret awe and dread of his preſence, of his infinite power and eter-nal juſtice.

Now,

Now, fear being one of the first things that is imprinted upon us from the apprehension of a Deity, it is that passion, which above all other gives the greatest advantage to religion, and is the easiest to be wrought upon. Hence the wise man does so often call *the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom*, because here usually religion begins, and first takes hold of this passion, Prov. xvi. 6. *By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.* Fear is a good sure principle, and one of the best guards and securities against sin: Other passions are fickle and inconstant, but we cannot shake off our fears, nor quit ourselves of them, so long as we believe the reality of the object; there will be fear and terror in a guilty conscience, so long as it believes a holy, and just, and omnipotent God, and that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Other passions are more under the government of reason, as our love, and hope, and anger: But fear is the most natural, and most deeply rooted in the sensitive nature, and therefore is common to us with all other creatures, who have any considerable degree of sense, or any other passion: and we may observe those creatures, who scarce betray any other passion, to be fearful of danger, and to flee from it. Now, fear having less to do with reason, the effects of it are less to be hindered. All the reason in the world cannot command down our fears, unless the danger be removed, or some probable way shewn of avoiding or mastering it; and therefore arguments of fear are great eloquence, and have a mighty force and power of persuasion. *Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord*, saith St Paul, *we persuade men.* One of the best sort of arguments to fright men from sin, and to bring them to their duty, are the *terrors of the Lord.* These take the fastest and surest hold of men, even of the most obstinate and obdurate sinners; for arguments of love and kindness will work but little upon such persons; some ingenuity is required to be swayed by such considerations; but the perversest creatures love themselves, and may be wrought upon by arguments of fear: so

that

at it is agreeable both to the nature of man and of ligion, to propound such arguments to our consi- ration.

III The fear of God is the best antidote against e fear of men. We are very apt to be awed by en, and to start from our duty for fear of tempo- l evils and sufferings. This fear seized upon St eter, and made him deny his master. And where e fear of men does not prevail so far, yet it will any times make men shy and timorous in the own- g of religion in the times of danger. This made icodemus to come to our Saviour *by night*, John . 2. So likewise *many of the rulers* who *believed Christ*, durst not *make open confession of him, lest ey should have been put out of the synagogue*, John i. 42. Some men that have good inclinations to the uth, and are inwardly convinced of it, yet in times danger they love to be wise and cautious: They ive an eye to a retreat, and are loath to venture too r. But if we give way to these fears, and suffer em to possess us, we shall be exposed to many mptations, and be liable to be seduced from our ity. So Solomon observes, Prov. xxix. 25. The *ar of man bringeth a snare.*

Now, if we would cast out this fear of men, it ust be by a greater fear, which is stronger and ore powerful; and that is the fear of God, Is. viii. 2. 13. *Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid;* eaking of the fear of men, against which he pre- ribes this remedy, *Sanctify the Lord of hosts him- lf, and let him be your fear, and let him be your read.* If God be once the object of our fear, and e be thoroughly possessed with awful apprehensions f him, the frowns of men, and the wrath and dis- leasure of the greatest upon earth, will signify no- hing to us. This preserved Moses amidst all the emptations of a court: Heb. xi. 27. *He feared not he wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.* He could easily bear the anger of Pharaoh, when by faith he beheld the omnipotent ustice of *the King immortal and invisible.*

IV. If

IV. If God be infinitely more to be dreaded than men, then *who is to be obeyed, God or men? judge ye.* I speak not this to diminish our reverence to magistrates, and their authority; for by persuading men to fear God, who commands obedience to magistrates, we secure their reverence and authority: But when the commands of men are contrary to God's, and come in competition with them, shall we not hearken to him who is supreme, the greatest and most powerful? Shall we not obey him who hath the most unquestionable authority over us, and right to command us? Shall we not dread him most, who is to be feared above all; who can be the best friend, and the sorest enemy, is able to give the greatest rewards to our obedience, and to revenge himself upon us for our disobedience, by the most dreadful and severe punishments? The great Socrates, when he was accused by the Athenians for corrupting and seducing the youth of Athens by his philosophy, makes this generous defence for himself, more like an apostle than a philosopher, "That he believed this province "was committed to him by God, that he was call-"ed by him to this employment, to endeavour to "reform the world; and therefore for him to for-"sake his station for fear of death, or any other "temporal evil, would be a most grievous sin." And afterwards (as Plato gives us the account of it) he says, "I am not afraid to die: but this I am a-"fraid of, to disobey the commands of my superior, "and to desert the station he hath placed me in, and "to give over the work which he hath appointed me, "and therefore, (says he), if you would dismiss me "upon these conditions, that I would forbear for the "future to instruct the people, and if after this I be "found so doing, I should be put to death; if I might "be released upon these terms, I would not accept "them; I would thank you for your good-will, but this "I must affirm to you, that I ought to obey God "rather than you; and so long as I have breath, I "will never give over exhorting and teaching the "people, and inculcating the precepts of philosophy "upon every one I meet with."

Could

Could a Heathen, who had but very obſcure apehenſions of the rewards of another life, in comriſon of what Chriſtians have by the revelation of e goſpel; could he take up this brave reſolution, d die in it? Did he with ſo much conſtancy deſpiſe e wrath and reproaches of men, and with ſo much earfulneſs entertain death, rather than to flinch from duty? How does this upbraid the cowardice of any Chriſtians, who are ſo eaſily deterred from eir duty, and are apt to quit their religion for fear ſufferings? Since *life and immortality is brought light by the goſpel*, and *the wrath of God is* ſo clear*revealed from heaven*, what a folly is it for any n *to chuſe iniquity rather than affliction*, as the exſſion is in Job; and to forfeit the favour of God, the friendſhip of the world?

The fear of men will not be a ſufficient plea and cuſe for men at the day of judgment; it will not n be enough to ſay, This I was awed into by the prehenſion of ſuch a danger, by the fear of ſuch erings; to avoid ſuch an inconvenience, I knowly committed ſuch a ſin; for fear of being peruted, I violated my conſcience, and choſe rather truſt God with my ſoul, than men with my eſtate; ſave my life, I renounced my religion, was *aſhad of Chriſt, and denied him before men.* Our Saur hath told us plainly, that this will not ſerve us the great day, Mark viii. 38. *Whoſoever therefore ll be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this aderous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the n of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory his Father, with the holy angels.* And Rev. xxi. in that catalogue of ſinners which ſhall be *caſt into lake of fire and brimſtone, the fearful and unbevers* are particularly mentioned.

And indeed, they who out of fear of men offend od, are guilty of this unreaſonable folly; they incur e danger of a greater evil, to avoid a leſs, and to re their eſtates or their lives, they plunge themves into hell; whilſt they are endeavouring to epe the hands of *men that ſhall die*, they *fall into hands of the living God.*

Laſtly,

Lastly, If God be the great object of our fear, le all impenitent sinners represent to themselves *the ter rors of the Lord, and the power of his anger.* Thi consideration, if any thing in the world will do it will awaken them to a sense of the danger of thei condition, and of the fatal issue of a wicked life Were but men possessed with due apprehensions of th power of God; the fear of men, and what they ca do to us, would have no influence upon us in com parison of the fears of divine vengeance. Were w sensible what it is to displease God, *in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways,* who ca make us as miserable, as we are capable of being and more miserable than we can now imagine, no only in our bodies, but in our souls, not only in thi world, but in the other, not only for a time, bu without end; would not this make us afraid to of fend and displease him?

Can any consideration be more powerful to restrai us from sin, and to argue us to repentance and obe dience, than this? We may oppose the eternal di pleasure of God, not only to all *the pleasures of si* but to all *the terrors of sense,* which are *but for moment.* When men would allure us to sin by th baits and temptations of pleasure, or discourage an deter us from our duty by the threatenings of dange and sufferings; let us oppose to these the anger o the great God, and the infinite treasures of his wrath and the serious thoughts of this will blunt the edge o all temptations, and quench all motives and incentive to sin.

Do we fear the wrath of man, whose power short, *and whose breath is in his nostrils,* who can bu afflict a little, and for a little while; and is not th wrath of the eternal God much more dreadful? Is no *destruction from the Lord a terror to thee?* Dost tho *fear man that shall die, and the son of man tha shall be made as grass;* and dost thou stand in n awe of *him who lives for ever?* Is the fear of me so prevalent upon us, and shall not *the terrors o the Lord* have a much greater effect upon us God is the supreme, and indeed the only object o

r fear, in compariſon of whom nothing elſe is to be eaded, Pſal. lxxvi. 7. *Thou, even thou art to be ired, and who may ſtand in thy ſight, when once ou art angry?* And Pſal. xc. 11. *Who knoweth th wer of thine anger? As is thy fear, ſo is thy wrath.*) paſſion in the ſoul of man is more infinite and ununded than our fear; it is apt to fill our minds with dleſs jealouſies and ſuſpicions of what may befal us, the worſt that may happen: But if we ſhould extend r fears to the utmoſt of what our wild and affrighted aginations can reach to, they could not exceed the eatneſs of God's wrath: *As is thy fear, ſo is thy rath.*

Let us then conſider things impartially, and fear him)ſt who hath the greateſt power, and conſequently ıom of all other perſons in the world it is moſt danrous to offend. Let us ſet before us God and men; : ſingle death of the body, and the ſoreſt and moſt ſible torments of body and ſoul together; temporal ictions and ſufferings, and eternal pains and ſorrows: d when we are apt to fear what men can do unto let us conſider how much more he can do, to om power belongs, if for fear of men we will ven-e to provoke him. When men threaten us with a ſon; let us think of the chains of darkneſs: When :y would terrify us with fire and faggot, let us think the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone: When are threatened with baniſhment, let us conſider how :at a miſery it will be to be baniſhed from the glo-ıs and bliſsful preſence of God for ever: When the nger of a temporal death is preſented to us, let us re-:mber the worm that never dies, and the fire that is t quenched.

Ye that are ſo bold as to offend God, and affront e Almighty to his face, by profane blaſphemies, and ıpudent impiety, conſider what ye do, how great a nger you run upon, to what fearful miſery you ex-ſe yourſelves, whenever you thus offend him; ink of that queſtion of the Apoſtle, and anſwer it if ıu can, *Will ye provoke the Lord to jealouſy? are ſtronger than he?* Take warning on this ſide hell, hile ye may eſcape it; flee from the wrath which

is to come, while it is yet to come, before it overtak
you, and there be no escaping.

And let it not be grievous to us, to be put in mi
of these terrible things. How much easier is it no
to hear of them, while they may be avoided, than
endure them hereafter, when they will be both unavoi
able and intolerable? And look upon them as the b
and most faithful friends, who deal plainly with you
these matters, and acquaint you with the true state
things, and tell you nothing but what you will certai
ly find true, if you persist in this dangerous course
offending God; who represent things to you as th
are, and forewarn you of so great and certain a da
ger.

It is no pleasure to any man to speak of such drea
ful and tragical things; it can be no delight to frig
men, and to grate upon their ears with such harsh a
unwelcome words: But it is necessary to the great
part of sinners, to set their danger before them in t
most terrible and frightful manner; and all this lit
enough to awaken the greatest part of mankind to a d
consideration of their ways. Soft words, and sob
reason, and calm arguing will work upon some perso
some sinners are more yielding, and may be taken
upon parley: But others are so obstinate and resolve
that they are not to be carried but by storm; and
this case, violence is the greatest act of friendship a
kindness. Our Saviour when he spake these terrib
words to his disciples, and gave them this warnin
does insinuate, that it proceeded from a most since
and hearty friendship to them: *And I say unto yo
my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill t
body, and after that have no more that they can d
but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, &*

SE

SERMON CCLII.

he efficacy of prayer, for obtaining the Holy Spirit.

LUKE xi. 13.

w much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy ſpirit to them that aſk him?

The firſt ſermon on this text.

THE great advantages which we have by the Chriſtian religion, are theſe *three:*

1. A more perfect rule for the direction our lives.

2. A more powerful aſſiſtance to enable us to the formance of our duty. And,

3. The aſſurance of a glorious and an eternal reward. And all theſe are contained in that excellent ſermon our bleſſed Saviour upon the mount: of which s paſſage in St. Luke is a part, although it was ſpo- here by our Saviour upon another occaſion, and at ther time.

Our Saviour begins that ſermon with the laſt of ſe, as being the great motive and encouragement to duty, the promiſe of bleſſedneſs, and of a great ard in heaven.

And then he lays down the rule which was the ſub- nce of thoſe moral duties, which are contained in Law and the Prophets; only he explains and ſup- es whatever was obſcure and defective before, and reby brings our duty to a greater certainty, and arneſs, and perfection than it had before.

But becauſe this would have ſignified little to us, i we be ſtill unable to perform our duty, and to obe that law which God hath given us, and to the obedi ence whereof he hath promiſed ſo great a reward therefore that nothing might be wanting to excite an encourage our obedience, our bleſſed Saviour, afte he had made our duty as ſtrict as poſſible, leſt w ſhould faint and be diſcouraged under an apprehenſio of the impoſſibility, or extreme difficulty of perform ing what he requires of us, is pleaſed to promiſe a aſſiſtance equal to the difficulty of our duty, and ou inability of ourſelves to perform it; knowing that w are without ſtrength, and that nothing is a greate diſcouragement to men from attempting any thing than an apprehenſion that they have not ſufficien ſtrength to go through with it, not being able of them ſelves alone to do it, and deſpairing of aſſiſtance fro any other.

And this is the great diſcouragement that moſt me ly under, as to the buſineſs of religion; they are con ſcious to themſelves of their own weakneſs, and no ſufficiently perſuaded of the divine aſſiſtance; like th lame man in the goſpel, that lay at the pool of Be theſda to be healed; he was not able to go in himſel and none took that pity on him as to help him in.

Hence it comes to paſs, that a great many are di ſheartened from engaging in the ways of religion, be cauſe ſome ſpies, thoſe who have only taken a ſuper ficial view of religion, have brought up an *evil repor upon that good land*, which they pretend to hav ſearched, ſaying, as they of old did, when they return ed from ſearching the land of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 31 32, 33. *We be not able to go up againſt the peopl for they are ſtronger than we: And they brought u an evil report upon the land which they had ſearche unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, The land throug which we have gone to ſearch it, is a land that eat eth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people tha we ſaw in it, are men of a great ſtature. An there we ſaw the giants, the ſons of Anak, whic come of the giants: and we were in our own ſight a graſhoppers,*

grashappers, and so we were in their sight. Just is we are apt to misrepresent religion to ourselves, as he difficulties of it were insupportable, and the enes which we are to encounter, were infinitely too ong for us; not considering that the Lord is with , and notwithstanding our own impotency and weakss, yet by his strength we may be (as St. Paul expresh it) *more than conquerors.*

Therefore to remove this discouragement, and to t life into the endeavours of men, our blessed Saviour ures us, that God is ready to assist us, and to supr our weakness and want of strength by a power m above, even by giving us his holy Spirit, which a Spirit of might and of power, and of the fear of : Lord, as he is called by the Prophet; and he is dy to bestow so great a gift upon us on the easiest ms and conditions imaginable; if we will but ask s blessing of him, *How much more shall your heaven-Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? How much more?* Which words are an argument m the less to the greater, by which our Saviour m the confidence which children naturally have in : goodness of their earthly parents, that they will : deny them things necessary and convenient for them, hey earnestly beg them at their hands, argues Chrins into a great confidence of the good will of their avenly Father, and of his readiness to *give his Holy irit to them that ask him.*

The force of which argument depends upon a dou: comparison, of the quality of the persons giving, d of the nature of the gift.

1. The quality of the persons giving. *Fathers upearth,* and our *heavenly Father.* If *earthly fa-rs* be naturally disposed to give good things to ir children, how much more may we believe this our *heavenly Father?* if they who are but men ve so much goodness; how much more confintly may we presume it of God, who excells in all rfections, and whose goodness excells all his oer perfections? *If they who are evil,* that is, ma-

ny times envious and ill natured, and at the best but imperfectly good; how much more God, who is infinitely good, and even goodness itself? If they who are many times indigent, or but meanly provided of the good things they bestow, and if they give them to their children, must want them themselves; how much more God, who is not the less rich and full for the overflowings of his bounty, and can never impair his estate, nor impoverish himself by conferring of his blessings and benefits upon others?

2. If we compare the nature of the gifts. If earthly parents that are evil, be ready to bestow good things upon their children, things necessary and convenient only for their bodies and this life; how much more confidently may we believe the good God inclined to bestow upon his children the best things, things necessary for their souls, and conducing to their eternal life and happiness?

So that in the handling of these words, I shall,

First, Endeavour to shew what is comprehended in this gift of the Holy Spirit, and how great a blessing and benefit it is.

Secondly, What kind of asking is here required.

Thirdly, To confirm and illustrate the truth of this proposition, that God is very ready to give the Holy Spirit *to them that ask him.*

Fourthly, To remove a considerable objection to which this discourse may seem liable. And,

Fifthly, To make some practical application of it to ourselves.

First, I shall shew what is comprehended in this gift of the Holy Spirit, and how great a blessing and benefit it is. St. Matthew expresseth this somewhat differently, chap. vii. 11. *How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?* Which compared with the expression here in St. Luke, doth intimate to us, that the Spirit of God is the chief of blessings, or rather the sum of all good things. The promise here in the text is not expressed so generally as it is in St. Matthew; but our Evangelist instanceth in the greatest gift that God can

beſtow upon his children; the gift of his Holy rit, which is indeed the chief of all other, the ſum l comprehenſion of all ſpiritual bleſſings: for it tains in it the preſence and reſidence, the continual uence and aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit upon the ds of men, together with all the bleſſed fruits and cts of it, in the ſanctifying and renewing of our rts in all thoſe particular graces and virtues, which in ſcripture called *the fruits of the Spirit; in hteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Goſt, ealing us up to the day of redemption*, and in being *ledge* of our future inheritance, and of a bleſſed urrection to eternal life. All theſe are mentioned ripture, as the fruits and effects of God's Holy Spirit, therefore it will come within the compaſs of this miſe concerning the gifts of God's Spirit; *How e ſhall your heavenly Father*, &c.

And, which I deſire may be eſpecially conſidered, be- e it will conduce very much to the clearing of ſome culties in my following diſcourſe; By the gift of l's Holy Spirit, is not only meant the common and ſient operations of God's Spirit upon the minds of , exciting and diſpoſing them to that which is d; (for thus the Spirit was given to men in all ages n the beginning of the world) but the ſpecial pre- e and reſidence, the permanent and continued in- nce and conduct of God's Holy Spirit, as a conſtant powerful principle of ſpiritual life and activity in d men; in which ſenſe the ſcripture tells us, that Holy Ghoſt reſides and dwells in believers, that *live in the Spirit*, and *walk in the ſpirit*, and *led by the ſpirit*: for this phraſe of *the giving the Holy Ghoſt, or of God's Spirit*, does always think) in the New Teſtament ſignify either the aculous and extraordinary gifts conferred upon the oſtles and primitive Chriſtians, in order to the ef- ual planting and propagating of the goſpel; and ſo uſed Acts v. 32. where St. Peter ſays, that the ly Ghoſt, *whom God had given to them that obey* , was a witneſs of the reſurrection and aſcenſ-

on of our Saviour, that is, gave testimony and confi
mation thereto: or else for the special residence, an
continual influence and assistance of God's Holy Spir
in and upon the minds of good men. And so we fin
this phrase frequently used, Rom. v. 5. *The love o*
God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghos
which is given unto us; meaning for the strengthenin
and assistance of believers to all patience and long-suf
fering under the persecutions which attended them
for so the Apostle reasons, *We glory in tribulation*
knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and pa
tience experience, and experience hope, and hope mak
eth not ashamed, because the love of God is shed a
broad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is gi
ven unto us; that is, for our support and assistanc
under sufferings. So likewise, 1 Thess. iv. 8. Whe
defiling of our bodies by lust, is called *a despising o*
God, who hath given unto us his Holy Spirit, (that is
to dwell in us: for which reason, the same Apost
calls our bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost and o
God, 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the tem*
ple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth i
you? And chap. xvi. 19. *Know ye not that your bo*
dy is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you
And 1 John iii. 24. God is said to give us his Spi
to enable us to keep his commandments, *He that keep*
eth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him
And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spi
rit which he hath given us. And chap. iv. 13. *Here*
by we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, be
cause he hath given us of his Spirit. So that the gi
of God's Spirit doth imply his continual residence i
good men; and his powerful assistance of them to
the purposes of holiness and obedience: and not onl
a transient operation upon the minds of men, by som
good motions and suggestions, which is common to ba
men, and those who are in a sinful and unregenerat
state.

Secondly, We shall in the next place consider
what kind of asking, in order to the obtaining o

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s great bleſſing, is here required by our Saviour, ien he ſays, *God will give his Holy Spirit to them it aſk him.* It muſt have theſe three qualifications:

1. It muſt be hearty and ſincere, in oppoſition to mal and hypocritical aſking.

2. It muſt be earneſt, and fervent, and importu- te, in oppoſition to cold, and faint, and careleſs ing.

3. It muſt be in faith, and a confident aſſurance it God will hear us, in oppoſition to doubting and truſt.

1. It muſt be hearty and ſincere, in oppoſition to mal and hypocritical aſking. When we pray for d's grace and Holy Spirit, we muſt not be as the pocrites are, who pray not ſo much to be heard of d, as to be ſeen of men; who have no ſenſe of ir wants, no hearty deſires to obtain thoſe bleſſings ich they beg of God, but only pray out of form l cuſtom, or for oſtentation of their piety and de- tion. It is not every prayer that is put up to God t of form and cuſtom, that will prevail with God the aſſiſtance of his grace and Holy Spirit; but it uſt be ſerious and in good earneſt, it muſt proceed m a true and real ſenſe of our need of God's Holy rit, ſuch a ſenſe as children have of their want of ad, when they are pinched with hunger.

2. This aſking muſt be earneſt, and fervent, and portunate, in oppoſition to cold, and faint, and in- ferent aſking; becauſe this declares the ſincerity of r deſires. Thoſe things which we are careleſs and lifferent about, and do not much matter whether we ve them or not, we aſk them coldly, and but ſel- m; if they be not granted at the firſt aſking, we ve them over, and look no farther after them: but oſe things which we heartily deſire, and are truly nſible of our want of them, we will uſe more ear- ſtneſs and importunity for the obtaining of them; d if we cannot obtain them at firſt, we will renew ir requeſts, be inſtant and urgent for them, and, if

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there be any hopes, never give over till we have prevailed.

And that in this manner we ought to beg of God his Holy Spirit, our Saviour declares in those metaphors which he uſeth of *asking*, and *ſeeking*, and *knocking*, which ſignify earneſtneſs, and diligence, and importunity, ver. 9, 10. *I ſay unto you, Ask, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock and it ſhall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.* And we have this more plainly declared in the parable before the text, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. *And he ſaid unto them, Which of you ſhall have a friend, and ſhall go unto him at midnight, and ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him? And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay, Trouble me not, the door is now ſhut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot riſe and give thee. I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend: yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.* If mere impudence and importunity in aſking, will prevail ſo much with men, what will not humble and conſtant ſupplication obtain from God? And ſo our Saviour applies this familiar parable, that in like manner we ſhould be importunate with God for ſpiritual bleſſings, and as if we were give him no reſt, till we obtain what we aſk, *I ſay unto you, Aſk, and it ſhall be given you,* &c. Not that mere importunity prevails with God: but as it is an expreſſion of a juſt ſenſe of our wants, and of a conſident perſuaſion of God's goodneſs, ſo it is effectual to procure the greateſt bleſſings at God's hands.

3. We muſt aſk in faith, and a confident aſſurance that God will hear us, in oppoſition to doubting and diſtruſt; with the ſame, nay, with greater confidence and aſſurance than children come to their earthly parents, to aſk thoſe things of them that are moſt neceſſary for them. And this condition or qua-

lifica-

ation of our prayers our Saviour doth elsewhere quently require, Matth. xxi. 22. *All things whatver ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive.* d St. James, chap. i. 5, 6. directing those who nt spiritual wisdom, to ask it of God, immediate- subjoins, *But let him ask in faith, nothing waver- ;* that is, not doubting but that God, to whom addresseth his prayer, is both able and willing to e him what he asks: and whoever comes to God, having this apprehension of him, *Let him not nk that he shall receive any thing of the Lord,* . 7. For upon what ground does he expect any ng from that person, whom he looks upon either nable, or unwilling to grant his desires? I pro- d in the

Third Place, to confirm and illustrate the truth of proposition, that God is very ready to give the ly Spirit to them that ask him. And for the proof his, I shall only use two arguments; from God's promise and declaration; and from the comparison ch our Saviour here useth in the text.

From God's free promise and declaration. And des that here in the text, I might produce several rs, but I shall mention only one, which is very n and express, and conceived in terms as large and versal, as can well be devised, James i. 5. *If any ou* (says the Apostle, speaking of Christians) *lack dom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be n him.* Where by *wisdom*, according to St. mes's notion of it, are meant all *the fruits of Spirit*, all Christian graces; for so he tells us, p. iii. 17. that *the wisdom which is from above*, that which is wrought by the divine Spirit, *is first pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full ercy and good fruits.* Now if God have freely pro- d so great a blessing and benefit to men, if they estly beg it of him, we need not doubt of his faith- ess to perform and make good what he hath pro- d.

2. The other agument which I shall principally insist

inſiſt upon, ſhall be from the compariſon which ou Saviour here uſeth in the text, *if a ſon ſhall as bread of any of you that is a father, will he give hi a ſtone?* This was a proverbial ſpeech amorg th Jews, which ſeems from them to have been derived t the neighbour nations, as appears from that of *Plautus Alterâ manu fert lapidem, alterâ panem oſtenta* he carries a ſtone in one hand, and holds forth brea in the other; *If a ſon ſhall ask bread of any o you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone?* Th is, if he ask that which is abſolutely neceſſary, will h give him that which will do him no good? *Or if h ask a fiſh; will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent or if he ask an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion?* Th is, if he ask that, which though it be not abſolutely ne ceſſary, yet may be very convenient; will he give hi that which is hurtful and pernicious? hardly any earth ly parent, though otherwiſe never ſo bad, would de thus with his children; and can we ſuſpect it of God certainly it is much further from him to deny to us h children, thoſe better and more neceſſary good thing which we humbly, and heartily, and earneſtly beg him in a confident perſuaſion of his goodneſs.

If ye then being evil (many times bad enough in ther reſpects, and at the beſt come infinitely ſhort God in point of benignity and goodneſs) *know how give good gifts unto your children; how much mo ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to the that ask him?*

This is a plain and undeniable argument, fitted all capacities, becauſe it proceeds upon two ſuppoſitio which every man muſt acknowledge to be true.

1. That earthly parents have generally ſuch a n tural affection for their children, as does ſtrongly i cline them to give them ſuch good things, as are n ceſſary and convenient for them, and which will n ſuffer them, inſtead of good things, to give the ſuch things as either are no wiſe uſeful, or any w hurtful to them; this is a matter of common a

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rtain, and ſenſible experience, which no man can de-

2. The other ſuppoſition, which is as evident in aſon, as the former is in experience, is this, That od is better than men, and that there is infinitely ore goodneſs in him, than in the beſt man in the orld; becauſe goodneſs in its moſt exalted degree, d higheſt perfection, is eſſential to that notion which men have of God; and this being a common prin-le, in which men are univerſally agreed, no man n gainſay it.

Now let but theſe two things be ſuppoſed, that men, ough otherwiſe evil, yet commonly have ſo much of ural goodneſs and affection for their children, as to be dy to give them thoſe things which are good for m; and that God is infinitely more liberal and ntiful than men; and it will appear to be a thing hly credible, that this good God will not deny the t of gifts, even his Holy Spirit to them that ask n.

But for the farther illuſtration of this argument, we l conſider a little more particularly the terms of the ıpariſon which our Saviour here uſeth; our *earth-*nd our *heavenly Father; temporal* and *ſpiritual d things.*

1. Our *earthly* and our *heavenly Father*, in which ns the givers are compared together. Now there three conſiderations in a giver, which make him able of being bountiful, and diſpoſe him to it.

(1.) That he have wherewithal to be liberal, and part with it, without damage and prejudice to him-.

(2.) That he be good-natured, and have a mind give.

(3.) That he be related to thoſe to whom he gives, be concerned in their welfare. Now all theſe ſiderations are more eminently in God, and with greater advantage than in any father upon earth.

(1.) God hath wherewithal to be liberal, and can

confer what benefits he pleaseth, without any harm or prejudice to himself. Earthly parents cannot many times be so good to their children as they desire, because they have it not to bestow; they cannot perhaps feed them plentifully without pinching themselves, nor give them fit provision, without impoverishing themselves: But the divine nature is a perpetual and inexhaustible spring of all good things, even of more than he can communicate; in him are all the treasures of riches, and power, and wisdom, and he cannot by giving to others, ever empty or impoverish himself; when he makes the freest communications of his goodness to his creatures, he does not thereby diminish and lessen his native store.

(2.) God hath infinitely more goodness than men he hath stronger propensions and inclinations to d good, than are to be found in the best natured and mo generous man in the world. All the goodness that i in the creature, is derived from God, who is the foun tain and original of it; it is but an imperfect image and imperfect representation of that excellency an perfection which the divine nature is possessed of in th highest degree that can be imagined. Men are man times *evil* and *envious;* (for so the word signifies, *ye be ingevil*, πονηροί, *of an envious, niggardly, an illiberal disposition*) but at the best men are of a fi nite and limited goodness and perfection.

But now no such thing as envy and ill-will can pos sibly happen to God, who is so rich in his own nativ store, and so secure of the enjoyment of what he hath that he can neither hope for the enlargement, nor fe the imparing of his estate.

(3.) God hath a nearer and more intimate relat on to us, than our earthly parents, and is more co cerned for our happiness. Our earthly parents a but the *fathers of our flesh*, as the Apostle speaks, *He* xii. 9. but God is *the Father of our spirits*. Nay respect of our very bodies, God hath the greatest ha in framing of us; 'tis he who *made us in secret, a curiously wrought us in the lowest parts of the earth in his book all our members were written, whi*

t continuance were faſhioned, Pſal. cxxxix. 15, 16.
) that we being God's creatures, our bodies the work
f his hands, and our ſouls the breath of his mouth,
od is more our father than he that begat us, and
ving a nearer and ſtronger relation to us, hath a
reater care and concernment for our happineſs.

So that if our *earthly parents*, who are many times
digent and ill-natured, and are but the *fathers of*
ur fleſh, and that but as ſecond cauſes in ſubordina-
on to God the principal author of our beings, I ſay,
they will *give good things to their children*; how
uch more ſhall our *heavenly father*, who is the foun-
in of all good, and goodneſs itſelf, who is our cre-
tor, the framer of our bodies, and *the Father of our*
pirits, be more ready to beſtow on us the beſt things
e can beg of him?

2. Let us compare likewiſe *temporal* and *ſpiritual*
ood things; in which terms you have the gifts com-
ared together. Now there are two conſiderations be-
nging to a gift, which are apt to move and incline a
erſon to beſtow it; if it be ſuch as is neceſſary, or
ery convenient for the perſon on whom it is beſtowed;
nd if it be ſuch as the perſon that beſtows it takes
reat pleaſure and delight in the imparting of it.

(1.) If it be ſuch as is neceſſary, or very conveni-
nt for thoſe on whom it is beſtowed, ſuch is bread
which earthly parents give their children; but that is
nly neceſſary to the body, and for the ſupport of this
rail and temporal life; but the Holy Spirit of God is
eceſſary to the life and health of our ſouls, to our
ternal life and happineſs. Now our ſoul being our-
elves, and eternity the moſt conſiderable duration,
God's Holy Spirit is conſequently much more neceſſary
nd convenient for us, than any thing that our earthly
arents can give us.

(2.) The Spirit of God is ſuch a gift as he takes
he greateſt pleaſure and delight in the imparting and
beſtowing of it. What can be more acceptable to
God, than that his children ſhould be made partakers
of his own divine nature, and conformed to his i-
mage; than that we ſhould be *holy as God is holy*,

and renewed after the image of him that hath created us in righteousness and true holiness? Than that human nature should be restored to its primitive perfection and dignity, and recovered to that state in which it came out of God's hands? than to see the ruin and decay of his own workmanship repaired; and his creatures, that were become miserable by the temptation of the Devil, restored to happiness by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God?

And this is the proper work of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, to sanctify and renew us, and (as the Apostle expresseth it) *to create us again unto good works*, to make us *partakers of his own holiness*, and to restore our souls to that condition that *his soul may have pleasure in us*. What can we imagine more acceptable to God, than that men should be brought to this happy state and temper? A child does not please his father so much when he desires to be instructed by him in learning and virtue, as we please God when we ask his Holy Spirit of him: for nothing can be more pleasing to him, than to bestow this best of gifts upon us.

So that the whole force of the argument comes to this, That if we believe that earthly parents have any good inclinations toward their children, and are willing to bestow upon them the necessaries of life, we have much more reason to believe that God our heavenly father is much more ready *to give his holy Spirit to them that ask him;* whether we consider the quality of the giver, or the nature of the gift.

I should now have proceeded to the other particulars which I propounded: but I shall only at present make some short reflexions upon what hath already been delivered.

What a comfortable consideration is this, to be so fully assured of God's readiness to bestow all good things upon his children, and even his Holy Spirit, if we ask it of him! and what an encouragement is here to constant and fervent prayer to God, who will not deny us the gift of his Holy Spirit, if we heartily and earnestly beg it of him! and what an encouragement is here likewise to the resolutions

and

d endeavours of a good life, that so powerful an istance is so freely offered to us, to enable us to *run e ways of God's commandments;* that God hath pro-sed his Holy Spirit to reside and dwell in us, to be a nciple of spiritual life to us, and to enable us to all e purposes of obedience, and a holy life?

And what infinite cause have we to bless God for e gift of his Holy Spirit, and to say with St. Paul, *essed be God for his unspeakable gift!* That he hath en his Holy Spirit to his church, at first in miraculous wers and gifts for the preaching of the Christian re-ion in the world, and ever since, in such degrees of istance, as were necessary in the several ages of the urch, for the preservation of the Christian religion in e world; that he hath given his Holy Spirit to every rticular member of his church, for the sanctifying and ewing of our natures, to *strengthen us to every good rd and work, and to keep us by his mighty power rough faith unto salvation!*

And this sanctifying virtue of the Holy Ghost, en-ling us to do the will of God, is more than any mi-aculous powers whatsoever. So our Saviour tells us, att. vii. 21, 22, 23. *Not every one that saith unto , Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: t he that doth the will of my Father which is in hea-n. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, ve we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name ve cast out devils? and in thy name done many won-rful works? and then will I profess unto them, I ver knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* en may do wonders by the power of the Holy Ghost, d yet be shut out of the kingdom of heaven; only ey that are assisted by the Spirit of God to do the will God, shall be admitted into heaven.

And this is matter of greater joy and comfort to us, an to work the greatest wonders, and to have power er devils, to cast them out of the bodies of men, uke x. 20. *Rejoice not in this,* saith our blessed Sa-our, *that the spirits are made subject to you, but re-ice in this, that your names are written in heaven.*

How is that? The ſanctifying virtue of God's Spirit i the pledge and earneſt of our heavenly inheritance, an that whereby we are *ſealed to the day of redemption.*

SERMON CCLIII.

The efficacy of prayer, for obtaining the Holy Spirit.

LUKE xi. 13.

How much more ſhall your heavenly Father give th Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?

The ſecond ſermon on this text.

IN diſcourſing on theſe words, I propoſed,

Firſt, To endeavour to ſhew what is compre hended in the gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned i my text, and how great a bleſſing and benefit it is.

Secondly, What kind of aſking is here required.

Thirdly, To confirm and illuſtrate the truth of thi propoſition, That God is very ready to *give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him.*

Fourthly, To remove a conſiderable objection, t which this diſcourſe may ſeem liable. And,

Fifthly, To make ſome practical application of it t ourſelves.

The three former of theſe I have diſpatched, and ſhall now proceed to the

Fourth thing which I propounded, which was, t remove an objection to which this diſcourſe may ſeem liable; the removal whereof will conduce very much t the clearing of this argument; about which men ſeem to have had very confuſed apprehenſions. The objection is

this; That none can ask the Spirit aright, but they at have the Spirit; and if this be so, then this ge declaration of God's goodness and readiness to stow his Holy Spirit upon them that ask him comes nothing; for a promise signifies nothing, which con- s a benefit on a person, upon a condition impossible him to be performed, unless he first have the benefit ich is promised; and to use a familiar comparison, this were the meaning of it, it would be like a fa- er's jesting with his child, when he is fallen, and lding him come to him, and he will help him up. w if God thus promise his Holy Spirit to them that it, with this reservation, that no man can ask God's rit, unless he have it, then this promise amounts to thing.

And that no man can ask God's Spirit without his rit, (that is, put up any prayer that is acceptable to d, without the assistance of God's Spirit) seems to in effect generally granted by those who assert, t no unregenerate man can pray to God aright, or form any other duties of religion in an acceptable nner; for to be unregenerate, and not to have the rit of God, are equivalent expressions in scripture, Paul having expressly told us, that *if any man have the Spirit of God, he is none of his;* that is, does belong to him, as every regenerate person most tainly does.

Besides that the scripture tells us, that all the pray- , and all the sacrifices, that is, all religious duties formed by a wicked man, are *an abomination to Lord;* because no prayer can be acceptable to God, ich does not proceed from sincerity, and is not put to God in faith; now sincerity and faith are graces per to the regenerate.

So that the objection in short is this, How can any n that hath not the Spirit of God, ask any thing of d aright, that is, sincerely, fervently, and in faith? d if without God's Spirit, no man can beg his Spirit him, what then signifies this promise, that *God will e his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

For

For the satisfaction of this objection, I shall lay down these propositions, which, if they be well considered, will conduce very much to the clearing of this matter.

First, That in the interpretation of promises and conditions annexed to them, we ought above all things to take heed, that we do not so interpret either the promise, or condition, as to make the promise void, and of none effect; for this cannot be done without a notorious affront to him that made the promise, who is presumed, if he was serious and sincere, to have intended a real benefit and advantage by his promise. And this rule holds not only in the interpretation of promises, but of all covenants, and contracts; *in omni interpretatione pactorum, contractuum, & promissorum, illud præcipue cavendum, ne in vanum recidant;* "In "the interpretation of all covenants, and contracts and "promises, we are principally to take care, that we "do not so interpret them as to make them signify "nothing:" And if this hold among men, much more ought we to be cautious and tender of interpreting the promises of God to a vain and trifling sense; for we cannot dishonour the goodness and veracity of God more, than to suppose that he mocks men by his promises, and makes a shew and offer of a benefit, when he really intends none; for all such proceedings as would be unbecoming the sincerity and integrity of a good man, are to be removed at the greatest distance from God, *All whose ways are faithfulness and truth, who is not as man, that he should lie, or as the Son of man, that he should repent.*

Secondly, I do not see but if this were the true sense and meaning of these words of our Saviour, that though *God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, yet none but those who have the Spirit of God, can ask it of him; I say, I do not see but that it must necessarily be granted, that such a promise as this amounts to nothing; because according to this interpretation of it, the benefit promised would be suspended upon a condition, which no man can perform, unless he be first partaker of the benefit; which is, in plain

English,

liſh, to promiſe to beſtow a thing upon a man on condition, that he firſt have the thing which I pro- to beſtow upon him; which ſignifies juſt nothing, is luſory and trifling, and conſequently not to be gined to be the meaning of a divine promiſe. There ot be a greater abſurdity in divinity, than to put a ſenſe upon the promiſes of God, as does plainly uate them, and make them of none effect. This be rom us, as the Apoſtle ſays upon another occaſion, *ll we make the promiſes of God of none effect? God id.*

nd whereas it is commonly ſaid, that the meaning ur Saviour's promiſe here in the text is this, that e who have the Spirit of God already, if they aſk eater meaſure of it, he will not deny it to them; gh this be true in itſelf, that God will not deny ter degrees of the grace and aſſiſtance of his Holy t to them that beg it of him, and may by a juſt y of reaſon be inferred from this promiſe, or con- d in it as part of the meaning of it, yet to make the whole meaning of it, ſeems to be a very forced unreaſonable limitation of theſe general words, ein this promiſe is conceived; for if we look back ne 10th verſe, the words are as general as could be deviſed, *Every one that aſketh, receiveth; and one that ſeeketh, findeth;* and containing matter vour and benefit, they ought in reaſon to be en- d and extended as far as may be, but by no means e reſtrained without evident reaſon. Now ſo far is e from being any evident reaſon for this, that there s to me to be an invincible one to the contrary, they ſhould not be thus reſtrained, and that is : If this promiſe of our Saviour's were thus to be ed; then all other promiſes of the like nature, it in like manner to be interpreted; which cannot ithout manifeſt violence and ſelf-contradiction. I inſtance in two other promiſes of the like nature importance. The firſt is, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, God there promiſes to reclaim them from their try, by convincing them of their ſin, and giving repentance, and his Holy Spirit to regenerate

and

and sanctify them, *Then will I sprinkle clean wat upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filt nesse, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit w I put within you, and I will take away the stony hea out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of fle And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause y to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgmen and do them.* Now that which I would argue fr hence, is this; Those idolatrous Jews, to whom G promises that he will cleanse them, and give them new heart, and a new spirit, and put his Spirit in them, were as yet unregenerate, and consequently, the objection supposeth, could not pray for these bl sings, nor ask them of God in a right manner; and y he suspends these blessings upon the condition of th praying for them, as is evident, ver. 37. *Thus sa the Lord God, I will yet be enquired of by the ho of Israel, to do it for them.* From whence it is pla that God would not bestow these blessings upon the without their seeking to him for them. Now if th persons, because they were unregenerate, could not pr for these things, then these promises signified nothin which is by no means to be imagined of the promi of God. So that it is clear, that the Spirit of God here promised to the unregenerate, upon condition their suing to God for it; and if so, there can be reason to restrain the promise in the text, which is the same nature, and made upon the same conditi to the regenerate only.

The other text I shall mention, is Jam. i. 5. *If a of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall given him.* In which words, St. James, under the n tion of wisdom, (as I told you before) doth comp hend all the fruits of the Spirit, which are the eff of regeneration and sanctification. Now this prom being conceived in so general terms, cannot witho manifest force and violence be restrained only to t regenerate; for then the promise should not have r thus, *If any man lack wisdom;* but, *If any man ha*

t

spiritual wisdom already, let him ask more of God.
1 see then what reason there is, why this promise of
d's Holy Spirit should be understood in the latitude
erein it is expressed, and not restrained to the rege-
ate only.

Thirdly, If by having the Spirit of God, be under-
od the general and common influence of God's Spi-
upon the minds of men, whereby they are quickened
l excited to their duty; I grant that no man that
h not the Spirit of God in this sense, can pray to
d, or acceptably perform any other duty of religion:
d this assertion is very agreeable to the phrase and
guage of the holy scriptures, which attribute all good
tions and actions to the Spirit of God working in us,
l assisting us; and in this sense unregenerate men
under the influence of God's Spirit, or else they
ld not be said to resist it: but they have not the
rit of God *dwelling in them*, which is the most
per sense of *having the Spirit of God;* in which
se the Apostle says, *If any man have not the Spirit
Christ, he is none of his:* but then it is specially to
noted, that the common and transient operation of
d's Spirit, which is preparatory to conversion and
eneration, and whereby God works in men a sense
sin, and some inclination and disposition to good-
s, is by our Saviour peculiarly attributed to the
ther, as his proper work, in which sense our Savi-
ur says, John vi. 44. *No man can come to me,
cept the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.*
rse 45. *Every man therefore that hath heard, and
rned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Now men
e said *to learn of the Father*, and *to be drawn by
n*, by those preparatory dispositions for the receiv-
g of the Christian religion, which were wrought in
en by that natural sense of good and evil, which
ey have by the law of nature, which is properly
e dispensation of the Father, as being the immedi-
e effect of God's creation, as a late judicious wri-
r hath very well observed, and more largely ex-
ained.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, But if by having the Spirit of God, I meant the special effect of regeneration, and sanctification, and the permanent influence and constant residence of God's Holy Spirit in good men, then I make no doubt to say, that those who have not the Spirit of God in this sense, may ask his Spirit of him; that is, those who are not yet regenerate and sanctified, may in an acceptable manner pray to God to give them his Holy Spirit, to the purposes of sanctification and perseverance in goodness; and they may ask this of God sincerely, earnestly, and in faith, which are the qualifications of an acceptable prayer. And this I think may be evidently made appear, both from scripture, and by good consequence from the concessions of all sorts of Divines.

1. From scripture. It is plain that wicked and unregenerate men are commanded and required to pray to this purpose. Not to mention the general command concerning prayer, which do certainly oblige unregenerate men, I will produce one plain and undeniable instance, Acts viii. 22, 23. where St. Peter directs Simon Magus, whom he expressly declares to be in an unregenerate state, to pray to God for the pardon of his great sin; which certainly he would not have done, had he thought an unregenerate man could not pray in an acceptable manner; because his counsel would have been to no purpose: but it is plain that St. Peter was so far from thinking that an unregenerate man could not pray acceptably to God, that he gives this as the reason why he should pray; because he was unregenerate: *Pray to God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee: for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*

2. This will appear farther by clear consequence from the concessions of all sorts of Divines, and principles granted on all hands.

1. It is universally granted, that it is a thing very pleasing and acceptable to God, that men should pray to be regenerate and sanctified; so that the matter of this prayer is unquestionably acceptable.

2. It

. It is likewiſe granted on all hands, that before a n is regenerate and ſanctified, he muſt be made ſible of his evil and ſinful ſtate, and of his great d of God's grace and Spirit, and that God's Spi- is able to work this change in him, and that it is will of God that he ſhould be regenerate and ctified.

3. It is likewiſe generally granted, that theſe pre- atory works of regeneration, theſe beginnings of r repentance and turning to God, and all deſires l endeavours to that purpoſe, are acceptable to d.

Now from theſe conceſſions it plainly follows, t an unregenerate man may pray to God acceptably his Holy Spirit, to regenerate and ſanctify him. r,

1. The matter of his prayer is very acceptable to d, according to the firſt conceſſion.

2. The manner of it may be acceptable, becauſe unregenerate man may pray for this ſincerely, with neſtneſs, and in faith; ſincerely, becauſe he may up his prayer to God, out of a true ſenſe of his erable and ſinful ſtate, and his great need of God's ce and Holy Spirit; and he that is truly ſenſible this, cannot diſſemble with God, he cannot but be y real and ſincere in this requeſt; and this ſenſe of condition, and the need of what he asks, will make earneſt and importunate; and he may pray in faith, t is, not doubting but that God is able and willing to at him what he asks, becauſe he may be convinced t the Spirit is able to work this change in him, and t this is the will of God, that he ſhould be regenerate l ſanctified, according to the ſecond conceſſion.

3. There is no reaſon to think, that God will not ept ſuch a prayer as this; becauſe theſe prepara- e works of regeneration, *viz.* a ſenſe of our ſinful te and of our need of God's grace and Spirit, and neſt deſires and prayers for theſe, are acceptable to d, according to the third conceſſion. So that now ope this objection, which hath been ſo troubleſome many, is fully ſatisfied.

As for those texts where it is said, that *the praye and the sacrifices of the wicked are an abominati to the Lord,* I shall briefly return this answer, Th these texts are not to be understood of a wicked a unregenerate man, simply as such, but as resolved continue such. And thus Solomon elsewhere in the pr verbs explains what he means by a wicked man, Pro xxviii. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearin the law, even his prayer shall be an abominatio* So that the wicked man, whose prayer is an abon nation, is such an one as is obstinately and resolved disobedient, such an one as *turneth away his ear fr hearing the law.* And David much to the same pu pose, Psal. l. 15, 16, 17. *Call upon me in the day trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify m But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take m covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instructio and castest my words behind thee?* Such wicked m as will not be reclaimed, what have they to do to pra or perform any other act of religion? Nothing that th do, whilst such, can be acceptable to God. And the same sense David says elsewhere, *If I regard in quity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my pray* God will reject the prayers of the best men, if they r tain a secret love to any sin.

If it be yet farther objected, That unregenera men are out of Christ, in and through whom we a accepted: To this I answer, That those only who a in Christ, are in a state of perfect acceptance with Go But the beginnings of this state, and all tendency t wards it, such as is hearty and earnest prayer to G for his Holy Spirit, to regenerate and sanctifyus, ha their degrees of acceptance from their relation to t perfect state whereof they are the beginnings, and t ward which they tend; for by the same reason that regenerate state is acceptable to God, all the begi nings of it, and preparations to it are proportionab acceptable; the degrees of acceptance being proportio able to the difference which is between the beginni of a thing, and the perfection of it.

Havi

aving thus endeavoured to clear this truth, I come, the

Fourth and laſt place, to make ſome brief applica- n of it to ourſelves.

1. This is matter of great encouragement to us, der the ſenſe of our own weakneſs and impotency. hen we conſider the corruption of our nature, the ength of our luſts, and the malice and power of Devil, and compare our weakneſs with the ſtrength thoſe mighty enemies of our ſouls, we are apt to ſpond in our minds, and our hearts are ready to l within us; like the people of Iſrael, when they ard the report of the ſpies, concerning the ſtrength the land which they were to conquer; and the ror of the inhabitants, they wiſhed themſelves al- oſt dead for fear of death; *would to God we had d in the land of Egypt; or would to God we had d in the wilderneſs. Wherefore hath the Lord ught us into this land, to fall by the ſword? re it not better for us to return into Egypt?* mb. xiv. 2. *&c.* Thus we are apt to be diſ- rtned, when we look only to ourſelves, and ſider the power of our enemies; but when we k beyond ourſelves, as Caleb and Joſhua did to t preſence and ſtrength of God, which was pro- ſed to go along with them; if we would but ſider thoſe gracious and powerful aſſiſtances of od's Holy Spirit which are offered to us, and are ady to join with us in this holy warfare of fighting ainſt ſin, and ſubduing and mortifying our luſts, ſhould then encourage ourſelves as they did *ar ye not the people of the land; for they are bread r us: their defence is departed from them, the Lord with us, fear them not*, Numb. xiv. 9. If we ould but apply ourſelves to God for the aids of s grace and Holy Spirit, and make uſe of that aſ- tance which he offers, we ſhould (as the Apoſtle eaks in another caſe, Heb. xi. 34.) *out of weak- ſs be made ſtrong, wax valiant in fight, and be able put to flight the armies of aliens.* If we would

but wisely consider our own strength, *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight!* All our spiritual enemies would quail before us, and as it is said of the Canaanites, Josh. v. 1. *Their hearts would melt, and there would be no more spirit left in them.* 2 Kings vi. 15. when Elisha's servant saw an host compassing the city of Samaria with horses and chariots, he was in great fear and perplexity, and said, *Master, what shall we do?* but when upon Elisha's prayer, *the Lord had opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw and behold the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha:* then he took heart, and his fears vanished, *because those that were with them were more than they that were against them.* Thus if our eyes were opened by faith, to discern those invisible aids and assistances which stand by us, how should this raise our courage and our confidence, and make us triumph with the Apostle, Rom. viii. 31. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* And to rebuke our fears, and the despondency of our spirits, as David does, *why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Trust still in God:* and to say with him when *multitudes of enemies compass us about, in the name of the Lord we will destroy them.* Eph. vi. 10. when the Apostle represents to the Christians what enemies they had to contest withal, *we fight not only against flesh and blood;* that is, not only against men who persecute us; but against Devils, who continually infest and tempt us, *against principalities and powers*, &c. he encourageth them against all these, by the strength of God, *finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Thus we should encourage ourselves in God, and animate our resolutions from the consideration of God's Holy Spirit, *that Spirit of might and of power*, which God is ready to give to every one of us, to assist us to do whatever he requires of us. And we have no reason to complain of weakness, so long as the strength of God stands by us, and the powerful aids of God's Spirit are ready to join themselves to us.

2. Let

2. Let us earneſtly beg of God his Holy Spirit, ſee-
ng it is ſo neceſſary to us, and God is ſo ready to be-
ow this beſt of gifts upon us. Bread is not more ne-
ſſary to the ſupport of our natural life, than the Ho-
Spirit of God is to our ſpiritual life and ſtrength:
nd there is no father upon earth more ready to give
ead to his children that cry after him, than God is
give his Holy Spirit to thoſe who heartily and ear-
ſtly beg it of him. Did we but know how great a
t the Spirit of God is, and how neceſſary to us, we
ould not loſe ſuch a bleſſing for want of aſking, but
would be importunate with God, and give him no
t, aſk, and ſeek, and knock, and addreſs ourſelves
him with all earneſtneſs, and never give over till our
ires were granted.

3. Let us take heed of grieving the Spirit of God,
l provoking him to withdraw himſelf from us. As
od is very ready to give his Spirit to us, ſo we ſhould
e the beſt entertainment we can to ſo great a gueſt,
t we give him cauſe to take away his Holy Spirit
m us. And there are two things chiefly which
ovoke God hereto.

(1.) If we reſiſt and quench the motions of his Spi-
, and be not compliant to the dictates and ſuggeſti-
s of it. We affront the Spirit of God which is given
for our guidance and direction, when we will not be
ed and governed, and led by it; we thruſt the Spi-
of God out of his office, and make his preſence uſe-
s and unneceſſary to us; and this cauſeth him to go
ay grieved from us.

(2.) If we harbour and entertain any thing that is
a contrary quality and nature to him, and inconſi-
nt with him; and of ſuch a nature is every luſt and
rruption that is cheriſhed in our ſouls. The Spirit
God is the beſt friend in the world: But as friends
ve the moſt tender reſentments of unkind uſage, ſo
e Spirit of God is of a moſt tender and delicate ſenſe,
d cannot bear unkindneſs, eſpecially ſuch an unkind-
ſs, as to take in to him the greateſt enemy he hath in
e world: for there is no ſuch ſtrong antipathy in na-
re, as there is between ſin and the Holy Spirit of

God. The Spirit of God cannot endure to dwell in an impure soul. If we would have the Spirit of God abide with us, we must give no entertainment to any lust, we must banish the love of all sin for ever out of our hearts: For if we harbour any lust in our bosom, it will be to us as Delilah was to Sampson, it will insensibly *bereave us of our strength: The Spirit of God will depart from us, and we shall be like other men.*

4. And *lastly*, God's readiness to afford the grace and assistance of his Holy Spirit to us, to enable us to the performance of our duty, and the obedience of his laws, makes all wilful sin and disobedience inexcusable. Let us not pretend any longer the impossibility, or insuperable difficulty of our duty, when so powerful an assistance is offered to us. If any man come short of happiness for want of performing the conditions of the gospel, it is by his own wilful fault and negligence; because he would not beg God's grace, and because he would not make use of it. If any man be wicked, and continue in a sinful course, it is not for want of power, but of will to do better. God is always before-hand with us, in the offers of his grace and assistance, and is wanting to no man in that which is necessary to make him good and happy. No man shall be able to plead at the day of judgment, want of power to have done his duty; For *God will judge the world in righteousness;* and then I am sure he will condemn no man for not having done that which was impossible for him to do. God hath done enough for every man to leave him without excuse. St. Paul tells us, that the blind Heathen should have no apology to make for themselves. Next to the being of a God, and his goodness and justice, I do as verily believe it, as I do any thing in the world, that no man shall be able to say to God at the great day, Lord, I would have repented of my sins, and obeyed thy laws, but I wanted power to do it; I was left destitute of the grace which was necessary to the performance and discharge of my duty; I did earnestly beg thy Holy Spirit, but thou didst deny me. No man shall have

the

e face to say this to God at the great day; every
an's conscience will then acquit God, and lay all the
ilt upon his own folly and neglect: For then *every*
uth shall be stopped, and *God shall be justified in*
saying, and overcome when we are judged.

SERMON CCLIV.

he bad and the good use of God's signal judgments upon others.

LUKE xiii. 5.

tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all
likewise perish.

THE occasion of these words you have at the beginning of the chapter, *There were present at that season* (says the Evangelist) *some that* 'd our Saviour *of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate d mingled with their sacrifices.* These in all probality were some of the faction of Judas Gaulonita, no about that time, as Josephus tells us, had stirred up e Galileans to a sedition against the Roman governent, under a pretence of asserting their liberty, by eeing themselves from the Roman tribute; and some these coming to Jerusalem to sacrifice, (as the cuom of the Jews was, especially at the time of the pasver) Pilate caused them to be slain upon the place, hile they were at this service, shedding their blood ith that of the beasts, which were killed for sacrifice. he report of this profane cruelty being brought to ir Saviour, he (as his custom was in all his conversatin, to raise some useful meditation, from such occurnces that happened, and to turn them to a spiritual dvantage) takes occasion from the relation of this

sad

sad accident, to correct a very vicious humour, which hath always reigned in the world, of censuring the faults of others, whilst we overlook our own.

The principle of self-love, which was planted in innocent nature, is by the fall and corruption of man degenerated into self-flattery; so that it is now almost become natural unto men, to supply the want of a good conscience, by a good conceit of themselves. Hence it comes to pass, that men are so ready to take all advantages to confirm themselves in that false peace which they have created to themselves in their own imaginations: And so they can but maintain a comfortable opinion of themselves, they matter not how uncharitable they are to others; and knowing no better way to countenance this fond conceit of themselves, than by fancying God to be their friend; hence it comes to pass, that they are so apt to interpret the several providences of God towards others, in favour of themselves; and to abuse the judgments of God, which fall upon their neighbours into an argument of their own comparative innocency.

And therefore our Saviour (who *knew what was in man*, and what kind of conclusions men are apt to draw from such occurrences of providence as this which was now presented, endeavours in the first place, to prevent the bad use which they were likely to make of it; *Suppose ye*, (says he) *that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay*, &c. To this instance of the Galileans, he adds another of the same kind, well known to all that dwelt in Jerusalem: And that was of the eighteen persons, who were slain by the fall of a tower, which was in the pool of Siloam at the foot of mount Sion, ver. the 4th, *or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, think ye that they were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay.*

And having thus anticipated their censuring of others, our Saviour proceeds to awaken them to a consideration and care of themselves, *I tell you, Nay: But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

The

The general sense of which words is, that impenicy in sin will certainly be the ruin of men sooner or er; it will probably bring great mischiefs and calaties upon men in this world; however it will infallir plunge them into misery in the next. But besides certain denunciation of misery and ruin to all imnitent sinners; which is the largest sense of the words, l agreeable to many other express texts of scripture, s probable enough, that they may more immediateand particularly refer to those temporal calamities ich were to befal the Jews, and be-spoken by our viour by way of prediction, foretelling what would the fate of the whole Jewish nation, if they conued impenitent, πάντες ὁμοίως ἀπολεῖσθε, *Ye shall perish in like manner;* that is, if ye do not repent, ides the vengeance of another world, a temporal lgment as sad as these I have instanced in, and not ch unlike them, shall come upon this whole nation: l so indeed it came to pass afterwards: For Josephus s us, that at the time of the passover, when the ole nation of the Jews were met together, as their tom was at Jerusalem, they were all shut up and ieged by the Romans. And he tells us farther, t in the time of that siege, upon a sedition among mselves, a great multitude of them were slain in temple, as they were sacrificing, and their blood ured forth, together with that of the beasts which re to be offered, as had happened before to the Gaans.

From the words thus explained, I shall observe these o things.

First, The wrong use which men are apt to make the extraordinary and signal judgments of God upothers. *Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinrs above all the Galileans, because they suffered such ngs?* intimating that men are very apt so to conde, and that the Jews did so.

Secondly, The right use that we should make of these ngs, which is, to reflect upon our own sins, and rent of them, lest the like or greater judgments overtake

take us. *I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

First, The wrong use which men are apt to make of the extraordinary and signal judgments of God upon others; and that is to be uncharitable and censorious towards others, which is commonly consequent upon a gross and stupid neglect of ourselves. For men do not usually entertain and cherish this censorious humour for its own sake, but in order to some farther end: they are not so uncharitable merely out of spite and malice to others, but out of self-flattery, and a fond affection to themselves. This makes them forward to represent others to all the disadvantage that may be, and to render them as bad as they can, that they themselves may appear less evil in their own eyes, and may have a colour to set off themselves by the comparison. It is the nature of guilt to flee from itself, and to use all possible arts to hide and lessen it. For guilt in the soul is like deformity in the body. Persons very deformed seldom arrive to that absurd conceit of themselves, as to think themselves beauties; but because they cannot think so, they do all they can to comfort and commend themselves by comparison. Hence men are apt to censure and aggravate the faults and miscarriages of their neighbours, that their own may appear the less; for a lesser evil in respect of a greater, hath some face and appearance of good; and therefore men are ready to take all advantages to represent others as bad as may be: and because there can be no greater evidence, that a man is a great sinner, than if he be declared to be so from heaven; hence it is, that men are so forward to interpret the remarkable judgments of God upon any person, as an argument of his being a more notorious offender than others.

For the farther explication and illustration of this point, I shall do these three things:

I. I shall shew that men are very apt to make this bad use of the signal judgments of God upon others.

II.

II. I shall more particularly consider several of the h conclusions which men are apt to draw from the lgments of God upon others; whether upon publick ieties and communities of men, or upon particular rsons.

III. I shall shew how unreasonable it is to draw m hence any such rash and uncharitable conclusions ncerning others; and likewise how foolish it is from nce to draw comfort and encouragement to ourselves.

I. That men are very apt to make this bad use of e signal judgments of God upon others. This our viour plainly intimates in the text, *Suppose ye that ese Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, cause they suffered such things? or those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell, think ye that y were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem?* which manner of speaking, our Saviour signifies, t men are very apt thus to suppose, that those upon om the extraordinary judgments of God fall, are ordinary sinners, but are guilty of somewhat above common rate of men.

Thus we find Job's friends, when they saw him afted by the hand of God, in so strange and extraorary a manner, from hence presently concluded, that must needs be a prodigious sinner; and because they uld find no evidence of this in his life and actions, refore they concluded that his wickedness was seet, and that it lay there where they could not see in his heart and thoughts: for this they laid down a certain conclusion, that being so remarkable a ferer, he must needs be a great sinner; and because y could discern no such thing in his outward converion, they charged him with hypocrisy, and concludall his external profession of piety and religion to false and counterfeit.

So likewise, when the man that was born blind was ought to our Saviour, John ix. 2. the disciples prely asked him, *Master, who did sin, this man or parents, that he was born blind?* This was that ich lay uppermost in their minds, the very first thing that

that suggested itself to their thoughts: surely this judgment was inflicted upon this man for some particular and extraordinary sin, which either he, or (because that was not so likely) his parents had been guilty of.

And we find in common experience, how prone men are to make uncharitable constructions of the judgments of God upon others, and grievously to censure those whom God hath smitten; partly because it looks like a vindication of themselves from the guilt of the like crimes, since they are not involved in the like sufferings; partly to gratify their pride and curiosity, in seeming to understand the reason and ends of God's judgments, as if they had been of his council, and saw farther into the reasons of his providence than other men; like some pragmatical people in civil matters, who though they think no more than their neighbours, yet will needs seem to understand those hidden and secret springs which move publick affairs: and which is yet worse, many times to gratify their own passions and foolish conceits, that God is angry with those things and persons which displease them, and that God's judgments are expressions of his particular dislike of those whom they disaffect, and would certainly punish, if the government of the world were in their hands. Or lastly, men think it a piece of piety, and affectionate zeal for God, and a taking of his part, to censure those heavily, whom God afflicts severely; like some foolish parasites, who if they see a great man be angry with any one and strike him, they think themselves bound to fall upon him, and out of an officious flattery will beat him too. But from whatever cause it proceeds, it is certainly a very bad thing, and our Saviour here in the text does with great vehemency deny, that any such conclusion can certainly be collected from the judgments of God upon others; *I tell you, Nay.* And to express this more vehemently, he repeats it again, *I tell you, Nay.* Let us therefore,

II. More particularly consider some of the rash conclusions which men are apt to draw from the judgments of God upon others, whether upon pub-

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lick societies and communities of men, or upon parti-lar persons.

1. It is rash, where there is no divine revelation in ie case, to be peremptory as to the particular sin or nd of it, so as to say, that for such a sin God sent ch a judgment upon a particular person, or upon a mpany of men, unless the judgment be a natural ef-ct, and consequent of such a sin; as if a drunken man e of a surfeit, or a lewd person of a disease, that is e proper effect of such a vice, or if the punishment dained by law for such a crime overtake the offender; these and such like cases, it is neither rash nor un-aritable, to say such a mischief befel a man for such fault; because such an evil is evidently the effect of ch a sin: But in other cases, peremptorily to conclude, great rashness.

Thus the heathen of old laid all those fearful judg-nts of God, which fell upon the Roman empire, in e first ages of Christianity, upon the Christians, as if ey had been sent by God on purpose to testify his dis-asure against that new sect of religion. And thus e-y party deals with those that are opposite to them, t of a fond persuasion that God is like themselves; l that he cannot but hate those whom they hate, l punish those whom they would punish, if the sway l government of things were permitted to them.

Thus the Papists on the one hand, attribute all the lgments of God upon this nation, the confusion and tractions of so many years, and those later judg-nts wherewith God hath visited us in so dreadful a nner, to our schism and heresy, as the proper cause them: (for so they call our reformation of ourselves m their errors and corruptions) but to what cause n will they ascribe the great felicity of Queen Eliza-h's long reign? And the peace of King James his gn? And then on the other hand, some of the dis-ters from our church are wont to ascribe these ca-ities to a quite different cause, that our reformati-hath not gone far enough from the church of Rome. is hard to say which of these conclusions is most rash l unreasonable; I wish other reasons of these cala-

mities were not too visible and notorious; the horribl impiety and wickedness which abounds and reigns a mongst us.

2. It is rash likewise for any man, without reve lation, to conclude peremptorily, that God must need in his judgments only have respect to some late an fresh sins, which were newly committed; and that a his arrows are only levelled against those impieties men which are now upon the stage, and in present view This is rash and groundless; and men herein take measure of God by themselves, and because they ar mightily affected with the present, and sensible of fresh provocation, and want to revenge themselv while the heat is upon them; therefore they think Go must do so too. But there is nothing occasions mo mistakes in the world about God and his providenc than to bring him to our standard, and to measure h thoughts by our thoughts, and the ways and metho of his providence, by our ways. Justice in God is wise, and calm, and steady principle, which as to t time and circumstances of its exercise, is regulated b his wisdom. Past and present are very material diff rences to us, but they signify little to God, whose v and comprehensive understanding takes in all differenc of time, and looks upon them at one view; so th when the judgments of God follow the sins of men at great distance, *God is not slack, as men count slac ness: For a thousand years are in his sight but as o day, and one day as a thousand years;* as the Apos reasons about this very case I am now speaking c 2 Pet. iii. 8.

And to convince men of their error and mistake this particular, the scripture hath given us many i stances to the contrary, that the justice of God ha many times a great retrospection, and punisheth t sins of men a long time after the commission of the This he threatens in the second commandment. *visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, un the third and fourth generation of them that hate hi* Thus we find he dealt with Ahab, *He did not bri the evil in his days, but in his Son's days, he brou*

upon his house, 1 Kings xxi. 29. So likewise we
ıd, 2 Sam. xxi. God brought three years famine up-
ı Israel in the days of David, for a national sin com-
itted in Saul's reign; namely, for the cruelty exercis-
l upon the Gibeonites contrary to the publick faith of
ıe nation given to them. So likewise the extirpation
: the Amorites, and the other inhabitants of Canaan,
as not a judgment inflicted by God upon them, only
ır the sins of that present age, but for the iniqui-
/ which had been many ages in filling up, as may
lainly be collected from the expression, Gen. xv. 16.
he iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full; which
as spoken four or five generations before they were
ɔoted out. And so also our Saviour tells us, that *the*
'ood of all the Prophets and righteous men which had
'en shed in all ages, *should come upon that generation.*

Nay, if this were not so, how should God judge
ıe world? And if it be consistent with the justice of
'od, to respite the greatest part of the punishment of
nners to another world; then certainly he may, with-
ut any imputation of injustice, defer the punishment
f sin in this world.

3. It is rash to conclude, from little circumstances of
ıdgments, or some fanciful parallel betwixt the sin
nd the punishment, what sinners, and what persons
ı particular God designed to punish by such a calamity.
There is scarce any thing betrays men more to rash
nd ungrounded censures and determinations concerning
he judgments of God, than a superstitious observation
f some little circumstances belonging to them, and a
onceit of a seeming parallel between such a sin and
ıch a judgment.

This was the ground of Shimei's rash determinati-
ɔn concerning David, and what particular sin of his
t was, for which God permitted his son Absalom to
ise up in rebellion against him, 2 Sam. xvi. 8. *The*
Lord hath returned upon thee (says he) *all the blood of*
the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned,
and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand
of Absalom thy son: and behold thou art taken in

thy own mischief. Here seemed to be as handsome a parallel between this misfortune which befel David and his carriage towards the house of Saul, as can easily happen in any judgment. David had carried away the kingdom from the family of Saul his father-in-law; and now by the providence of God, David's own son Absalom seems to be stirred up to supplant his father, and to ravish the kingdom out of his hands; the suitableness of the judgment to the supposed sin of David, would tempt any man that had the curiosity to pry into the judgments of God, and a fancy apt to be pleased with parallels, to have looked upon this censure of Shimei, as not without ground: For tho' David was in no fault as to Saul's house, tho' in truth and reality he had the best title to the kingdom that could be, it being disposed to him by God's appointment; yet because Samuel's anointing him to be King, was a thing privately done, and so might not either be publickly known, or not publickly believed, there seems to be a very fair colour and pretence for this censure of Shimei.

And therefore methinks the consideration of this one instance should very much deter wise men from peremptory conclusions concerning the judgments of God, upon such slight grounds as a supposed parallel between the sin and the punishment: and yet we find all sorts of men very superstitiously affected this way; all parties are very greedy to catch at any shadow of a parallel, between the judgments which befal their enemies, and the sins which they suppose them to be guilty of, and are apt to cry up such things as evident testimonies from heaven of God's displeasure against those, whom they have a mind to make odious.

In the beginning of the reformation, when Zuinglius was slain in a battle by the Papists, and his body burnt, his heart was found entire in the ashes; from whence (saith the historian) his enemies concluded the obdurateness of his heart; but his friends, the firmness and sincerity of it in the true religion. Both these censures seem to be built upon the same ground of fancy and imagination: But it is a wise and well ground-

ounded observation, which Thuanus the historian, who was himself of the Roman communion) makes on it. *Adeo turbatis odio aut amore animis, ut fit religionis dissensionibus, pro se quisque omnia superstitiosè interpretatur:* "Thus (says he) men's minds being prejudiced before-hand by love or hatred, (as it commonly falls out in differences of religion), each party superstitiously interprets the little circumstances of every event in favour of itself." Every ing hath two handles; and a good wit and a strong agination may find something in every judgment, hereby he may with some appearance of reason turn e cause of the judgment upon his adversary. Fancy an endless thing; and if we will go this way to ork, then he that hath the best wit, is like to be the st interpreter of God's judgments.

I do not deny, (as I touched before) but where the is evident, and the punishment is the genuine proct and natural effect of the sin, we may, without charitableness, ascribe the punishment to the sin, as e particular cause of it; as sickness to intemperance, d poverty to sloth and prodigality: or if a judgment remarkably inflicted upon a person, in the very act some notorious sin: or if when a person hath been ilty of a sin, which is unquestionably so, and out all controversy, if afterwards a judgment befal that rson, which carries the very signature of the sin upon it; as when the dogs licked Ahab's blood, in the ry same place where he had shed the blood of Naoth; in these and the like cases, a man may, without shness and uncharitableness, fix the cause of such a dgment upon such a sin; but then, as I said before, e sin must be very evident, and out of dispute, and e punishment must carry so plain a mark and signature on it, as without straining, and the help of fancy, obvious to every one's observation.

And yet even in these cases, the party himself, upon whom the judgment falls, may better make the interpretation than a by-stander; and therefore the scripture, as it is in all other things very instructive, so rticularly in this matter it observes this decorum,

not to bring in others making interpretations of th judgments of God, but the persons themselves, upo whom the judgments fall. Thus Adonibezek, Judg i. 6, 7. when the men of Judah had taken him, an cut off his thumbs and his great toes, the scriptur does not bring in others making a censure and inte pretation of this judgment of God upon him; bu brings him in making this reflexion upon himsel *Threescore and ten Kings, having their thumbs an their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under m table; as I have done, so God hath requited me.* S likewise Jacob's sons, when they were brought int trouble in Egypt, about their brother Benjamin, the presently reflect upon their sin against their brother Jo seph, Gen. xlii. 21, 22. *They said one to another We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in tha we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought u and we would not hear: therefore is this distress com upon us. Therefore behold also his blood is required* They took notice of the resemblance betwixt the si and the punishment; they had sinned concerning the brother, and they were punished in a brother.

4. It is rash likewise to determine any thing con cerning the end and consequence of God's judgment Commonly all parties that are down are apt to soot and flatter themselves, that God intends, by such an such judgments upon their adversaries, to make wa for the restoration of their own sect, and the restituti on of those things which they desire. Others, wh are more melancholy and concerned, are apt to loo upon the worst side of things, and to imagine dreadfu and dismal consequences. But it is a fond thing fo us to pretend to know the secret ends and designs o the divine providence: for sometimes God makes on calamity the forerunner of another; and sometime again his omnipotent wisdom forceth good out of evi and makes a great judgment in the issue to turn to mighty blessing.

Jacob thought the loss of his son Joseph, one o the greatest calamities that could have befallen him when it was the greatest mercy to his family tha coul

ld be: for in truth the providence of God sent him an harbinger into Egypt to provide for his father and family.

It is observed by the wise author of the history of council of Trent, that when Zuinglius and OEcolampadius, the two chief Protestant ministers among Swisses, died within a few days of one another, the pists interpreted this to signify God's design to re- re their former religion to them, in that he had ta- a away at once the two great pillars and supports of Protestant cause; upon which the author makes s wise observation: "Certainly (says he) it is a pious thought to attribute the disposal of all events to the providence of God: but to determine to what end these events are directed by that high wisdom, is not far from presumption. Men are so religiously wedded to their own opinions, that they are persuaded, that God loves and favours them, as much as they themselves do. But (says he) the things which happened afterwards, did confute this presumption; for the Protestant doctrine made a much speedier progress after their death, than it had done before." We think that a cause must needs sink, en some great supports of it are taken away: but d stands in need of no man; he can raise up new truments, or carry on his own design by the weak- and most unlikely means.

5. And *lastly*, It is rashness to determine that those sons, or that part of the community upon which judgments of God do particularly fall, are greater ners than the rest, who are untouched by it. And s is the very case our Saviour instanceth here in text, *Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners ove all the Galileans, because they suffered such ings? I tell you, Nay. Or those eighteen upon whom e tower of Siloam fell, think ye that they were sinrs above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell u, Nay.* And this brings me to the

III. Particular I proposed, which was to shew how reasonable it is for men to draw any such uncharible conclusions from the judgments of God upon oers, that they are greater sinners than others; and like-

likewise how foolish it is from hence to take any comfort and encouragement to ourselves, that because we escape those calamities which have befallen others, therefore we are better than they. Our Saviour vehemently denies, that either of these conclusions can justly be made from the remarkable judgments of God, which befal others, and pass by us; *I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

It is very unreasonable for men to draw any such uncharitable conclusions concerning others, that because the judgments of God fall upon them, that therefore they are greater sinners than others. For,

1. What do we know, but that God may inflict those evils upon those particular persons for secret ends and reasons, only known to his own infinite wisdom, and fit to be concealed from us? What do we know but he may afflict such a person in a remarkable manner, purely in the use of his sovereignty, without any special respect to the sins of such a person, as being greater than the sins of other men; but yet for some great end, very worthy of his wisdom and goodness? as for the trial of such a man's faith, and of his exemplary patience and submission to the will of God, it pleaseth God to set him up for a mark, and to suffer many and sharp arrows to be shot at him, to try whether his faith and patience be proof; as men set up armour and shoot at it with a double charge, not with a design to hurt it, but to prove and praise it.

We are assured that the goodness of God is such, that had it not been for sin, we had never known affliction, nor been exercised with it; but now, that we have all sinned, and upon a common account are all liable to the justice of God, he may single out from this common herd of sinners whom he pleaseth, to smite with his judgments, and for what end he pleaseth; and therefore when God at any time lets fly an arrow at a particular person, this only signifies at the utmost that he is a sinner in general, but no man can from hence with any certainty conclude, that this man is a greater sinner than other men.

And

nd this is very plain from those instances I have occasion before to mention; the instance of Job n God afflicted in a most terrible manner, for rial of his faith and patience, and to furnish all with a standing and glorious example of so great necessary a virtue: and from the instance of the in the gospel that was born blind, concerning n our Saviour expressly declares, that this judg- did not befal this man for any particular or re- able sin, which either this man or his parents een guilty of above others, but that the glorious r of God might be manifested in his miraculous John ix. 3. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor rents: but that the works of God should be made fest in him.*

What do we know but that God may send these ities upon some particular persons, in mercy to nerality; and upon some particular places in a , out of kindness to the whole? When wick- s has overspread a nation, and is grown uni- , if out of this herd of sinners, the justice of please to single out some few persons, and to them and hunt them down for terror to the hat others *may hear, and fear, and take warn-* this doth not signify that the persons selected for were in a different condition from the rest, or thers had not deserved the like judgments as well y; it only signifies, that *God remembers mercy midst of judgment,* and that he was not willing roy them all; that *he does not delight in the of sinners, but rather that they should turn from wickedness, and live.* He punisheth a few for ex- , that others taking warning by it, he may have portunity and occasion to spare a great many. but that the hand of God doth sometimes as e by a finger point at the sin, which it designs, ish: as when remarkable punishments follow upon notorious sins: when the sinner is pu- *flagrante crimine,* in the very act and heat of ; when some great and clamorous impiety calls some more immediate and sudden judgment heaven; when a sin is punished in its own kind, with

with a judgment so plainly suited to it, and so pat, th
the punishment carries the very mark and signatu
of the sin upon it; as in the case of Adonibeze
who was forced to acknowledge, that *as he had don*
so God had requited him; and as in the known sto
of Bajazet, who having been a cruel and barbaro
tyrant, was punished in his own kind, by falling i
to the hands of Tamerlane, who used him with th
same insolence and cruelty, which he had exercis
towards others.

In such cases as these, men may without uncha
tableness conclude, that such a judgment of God w
sent upon a particular errand to chastise and punish su
a sin; but then in such cases as these, we do not fro
the judgments inflicted conclude a person guilty of so
great sin which we did not know before; but by co
paring the sin, which we knew him to be guilty of, wi
the judgment which was inflicted, we do reasonably co
lect, that such a judgment was probably sent for su
a sin. But generally speaking, no man can with ce
tainty conclude, from the greatness of the judgme
that falls upon any one, that such a man was a mo
grievous sinner than others, who have escaped the sa
or the like judgments.

II. It is foolish likewise to take any comfort a
encouragement to ourselves, that because we have
scaped those sore judgments which have befallen
thers, therefore we are better than they are; for (
I have shewn) these judgments do not necessarily im
port, that those upon whom they fall, are greater si
ners, and that those who escape them are not so: but su
pose it true, that they were greater sinners than we a
for any man from hence to take encouragement to hi
self to continue in sin, is as if from the severe punishme
which is inflicted upon a traitor, a man should encour
himself in felony; both these sorts of criminals are b
the law in danger of death, only the circumstances
death are in one case more severe and terrible tha
the other; but he that from hence encourageth himse
in felony, reasons very ill, because he argues against h
own life. The only prudent inference that can be mad
is not to come within the danger of the law, whi
punishe

ishеth all crimes, though not with equal severity. Thus I have done with the first thing I propounded to speak to from these words, *viz.* the wrong which too many are apt to make of the signal extarordinary judgments of God upon others. I ceed to the

Second thing I observed in the text, *viz.* the right we should make of the judgments of God upon ers; and that is to reflect upon our own sins, and repent of them, lest a like or greater judgment over-e us. This our Saviour tells us in the next words, *t except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* As ie had said, there is no reason at all, why ye should iclude from those terrible judgments of God, which 're befallen those miserable persons, that they were ater sinners than yourselves, who have for the pre-t escaped those judgments: but instead of cen-ing others, you should look into yourselves: the st proper reflexion to be made upon such occa-is, is, that you are liable to the like judgments, ir sins have deserved that God's providence should 're dealt so with you, as it hath done with those lileans, *whose blood Pilate mingled with their sa-fices; or with those eighteen persons upon whom tower of Siloam fell;* and for what reasons so-er these judgments of God fell upon them, and pas-l by you, (which you are not at all concerned to quire into) to be sure, if you continue impenitent, u have reason to expect the like, or greater ruin. When we see the judgments of God abroad in the)rld, and to fall heavily upon particular places and rsons, we should argue thus with ourselves: For iat reason the holy and wise providence of God th dealt so severely with others, I know not; whe-er out of a particular displeasure against them, for me notorious sin committed by them: or whether r a merciful warning to me and others, or for)th; it is not for me to pry curiously into the coun-ls of God, and to wade into the depth of his judg-ents; but there is one use which I am sure it con-rns me nearly to make of it, to look into myself,

to

to search and try my ways, to repent of my sins, a to forsake them, lest whilst I am gazing upon othe I fall into the like or greater calamities. It may those persons and places which have been so fever visited with the judgments of God, were no more o noxious to him than I am; and, when this hath be done to others, in all appearance not guilty of grea er sins than I am, what may I not fear, who am the same condemnation? It may be they were n so great sinners as I am. This should awaken me much the more to a consideration of my own da ger: nay, possibly many of those whom the rod God hath smitten, were his own dear children. Th should startle men most of all: *For if this have be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry* If this have been the lot of those whom God love what shall be the portion of those whom he hates *If judgment begin at the house of God, where sha the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

The judgments of God, which are excuted upo particular places and persons, are designed by hi to be so many admonitions to *the inhabitants of t world to learn righteousness*. That fearful ruin whic befel Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities abo them, was not only intended for the punishment o the inhabitants of those wicked cities; but for a stand ing example, and a lasting terror to all ages of th world. So St. Jude tells us, ver. 7. that *Sodom and G morrah, and the cities about them, are set forth f an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

It is the advice of the Prophet, Micah vi. 9. *Hea ye the rod, and him that hath appointed it.* Ever rod of God, every affliction hath a voice, which doe not only speak to the sufferers, but to the spectato also; not only to those who are smitten, but to thos who stand by and look on: and if, when God send judgments upon others, we do not take warning an example by them: if instead of reflecting upon our selves, and trying our own ways, we fall a censuring of others; if we will pervert the meaning of God providences, and will not understand the design and intention of them, then we leave God no other wa

awaken us, and to bring us to a consideration of our il ways, but by pouring down his wrath upon our ads, that so he may convince us to be sinners by the ne argument, from whence we have concluded o-ers to be so: or if we continue impenitent, he may in us as incorrigible.

And thus I have done with the second observation I opounded *viz.* the right use we ought to make of e judgments of God upon others, which is, to re-ct upon ourselves, and to repent of our evil ways, t the like or greater judgments overtake us. I shall ly draw an inference or two from what I have al-dy discoursed upon these two heads:

1. Let us adore the judgments of God, and instead searching into the particular reasons and ends of m, let us say with St. Paul. Rom. xi. 33. *How un-rchable are his judgments, and his ways past find-out!* If he who was taken up into the the third hea-, and had such multitudes of revelations, and was nitted so much nearer to the secrets of God than are, durst not search into them, how much less uld we, who only converse here below?

Let us not then trouble ourselves with nice enqui-into these things: nor one another with mutual sures and uncharitable reflections upon one another: let us all agree in this, to acknowledge the righte-ness of God in all his providences to us and others, umble ourselves under his mighty hand, ἀσπάζε-τὰ συμβαίνοντα, to kiss all events of the divine provi-ce, and to believe, that if we be good, they shall n to our good. Let us, every one of us, comply h the open and visible end of God's judgments upon selves and others, which is, to *search and try our ys, and to return unto the Lord;* and for the rest, us believe that it is best for us, that things are as y are; that his *judgments are unsearchable, and his ys past-finding out.*

2. Let us not be rash in our censures and determi-ions concerning the judgments of God upon others; us not wade beyond our depth into the secrets of d: for *who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who h been his counsellor?* Let us not be hasty and per-

emptory to pass sentence upon others, because of any evil or calamity that befalls them. We may be as severe to ourselves as we please, this is safe and prudent; but *who art thou that judgest another man's servant?* What our Saviour said in the case of the woman accused of adultery, is very applicable to those who are so forward to censure others, as the causes of God's judgments; *He that is without sin, let him throw the first stone.* If there be any man that is not conscious to himself that ever he offended and provoked God, that man may have leave to lay all the fault of God's judgments upon others.

God hath of late years in his providence towards this nation so ordered his judgments, and they have fallen with so great an equality upon all sorts of men, that we cannot without great rashness fix the cause of them upon any particulars: but however, this does not appertain to us, to pry into the secret reasons of God's dispensations. That which properly belongs to us, is to take off our eyes from others, and to look into ourselves; and if we would do this, we should see reason enough for God's judgments, and great cause to admire his mercy and goodness to us, that he hath been pleased to spare us, when he hath ruined so many others.

So that the proper use of all the judgments of God upon others, is to bring us to a consideration of ourselves, and our own ways, and to argue ourselves into repentance. We should reason thus: The judgments of God, which have fallen here and there upon others, were intended for terror to us; and if we still continue impenitent, if we be unreformed by these providences of God, which were purposely designed and intended for our amendment; what can we expect, but that God should also send upon us the like or greater calamities, and that *except we repent, we should all likewise perish.*

I cannot apply these words, as our Saviour does, because, as I told you, they are probably a prediction of a particular event to the nation of the Jews, in case they continued impenitent, which they did, and this

s prophecy was afterwards sadly fulfilled upon them the utter ruin and destruction of that nation: but s we may assuredly say, from the warrant of the neral tenor of scripture, that if notwithstanding these eat judgments of God which have been upon us, and ve made such fearful desolations amongst us, we do t *search and try our ways, and turn to him who th smitten* others for a warning to us, we have rea- n to fear, that we shall suffer in the same manner, or it God will bring some greater temporal judgments on us, and be angry with us, until he hath consu- d us.

But whatever God may do, as to temporal judg- nts, this we are as sure of, as the word of God can ke us, that there is a sad fate hangs over all impe- ent sinners, which however they may escape in this rld, will certainly fall upon them in the next. *God th sworn in his wrath, that such shall not enter into reſt.* He is immutably determined to make such ever miserable, as by their final obstinacy and im- nitency refuse to be happy. And of this terrible om the judgments here in the text are but an im- fect type and representation. How glad would sin- rs then be, to suffer only such things as the Galile- s did! what a favour would they esteem it, to have worse fate than *those eighteen men, upon whom the wer of Siloam fell!* and to be crushed under the ight of the heaviest rocks and mountains, and there ly hid for ever, *from the face of him that sits upon e throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!* No, it a more fearful ruin, a destruction infinitely more terri- e, that attends those in another world, who will not re- nt in this life, even *everlasting destruction from the esence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* nd how great and fearful that is, is not to be ex- est in words, nor can we frame any perfect idea of from any of those pains and sufferings which we e acquainted with in this world: for *who knows e power of God's anger?* who can conceive the most of what omnipotent justice is able to do to ners?

Nor have we any reason in the mean time to think that God will put a stop to temporal judgments; but that if we be not reformed by all those terrible things which our eyes have seen, God will punish us yet seven times more for our sins. If we still persist in our atheism and profaneness, in our contempt of God and his worship, in our abominable lusts and impieties; what can we look for, but greater judgments, and a more fiery indignation to consume us and our habitations?

Methinks nothing is a sadder presage of greater calamities, and a more fearful ruin yet to befal us, than that we have hitherto been so little reformed by those loud and thick vollies of judgments which have already been thundered out upon us. This was that which at last brought so terrible a destruction upon the Egyptians, that they were hardened under ten plagues. To be impenitent under the judgments of God, which are so mercifully designed to reclaim and reform us, is to poison ourselves with that which was intended for our physick, and by a miraculous kind of obstinacy, *to turn the rods of God into serpents. O that we were wise, that we understood this, and that we would consider our latter end!*

SER-

SERMON CCLV.

reached at the morning-exercise at Cripple-gate.

MATTH. vii. 12.

herefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The following sermon, which was preached by the late Archbishop Tillotson about the year 1660, before he conformed to the church of England, is now reprinted at the desire of several Gentlemen, who have a great regard to the memory of so great a person; who also judge from the importance of the subject, that it ought to be rescued from that oblivion it lies under, while it is only in the morning-exercises.]

THESE words being brought in by way of inference from something said before, we must look back a little to find out the relation of hem to the former verses. At the seventh verse Christ commands to ask of God those things which we want; to encourage us to ask, he promises we should eceive; to induce us to believe this promise, he puts temporal case: Our earthly fathers, who are evil, give us good things when we ask them, how much nore easily may we believe this of a good God of inite goodness? Now as we desire God should give us those things we ask, so we should do to others; and not only so, but *universally in all other things, what we would that men should do to us, that we should do to others. That men should do unto you;* though the persons be expressed, yet we may take it impersonally,

by an usual Hebraism, as if it had been said, *Whatever you would should be done unto you*; leaving the person to be supplied in the largest sense: Thus, *Whatever you would should be done unto you by God or men. This is the Law and the Prophets*, i. e. This is the sum of the Old Testament, so far as concerns our duty to our neighbour.

The observation which ariseth from the words is this:

The great rule of equity in all our dealings with men is this; *To do as we would be done unto.* This rule hath been otherwise expressed, but not more emphatically in any other form of words than this here in the text, Matth. xxii. 39. *Love thy neighbour as thyself:* This requires that we should bear the same affection to our neighbour, which we would have him bear to us; but the rule in the text expressly requires that we should do the same offices to others, which we would have them do to us. Severus the Emperor (as the historian Lampridius tells us) did learn this rule of Christians, and did much reverence Christ and Christianity for it; but he expresseth it negatively, *Quod tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris:* Now this forbids us to do injuries to others, but doth not so expressly command us to do kindnesses and courtesies.

In speaking to this rule, I shall give you,

I. The explication of it.

II. The grounds of it.

III. The instances wherein we ought principally to practise it.

I. For the explication, the meaning of it is this: Put thyself into the case and circumstances of every man with whom thou hast to do, that is, suppose thou wert he, and as he is, and he were thyself, and as thou art; that then which thou wouldst desire he should do to thee, that do thou to him; and that which thou wouldst be unwilling he should do to thee, do not thou to him. Now this is an exact rule, for we are very curious in determining our own privileges, and what duty others owe to us; just so much as we take to ourselves, we must allow to others; what we expect from

others

thers when we are in such circumstances, we must do
ıe same to them in the like. And this is a plain and
ısy rule. Many men cannot tell what is law, or
ıstice, or right in such a case; many cannot deduce
ıe laws of nature one from another: but there is no
ıan but can tell what it is he would have another man
o to him; every man can take his own actions, and
ut them into the other scale, and suppose, if this that
do now to another were to be done to me, should I
ke it? Should I be pleased and contented with it?
nd thus by changing the scale, his own self-love,
ıd self-interest, and other passions, will add nothing
) the weight; for that self-interest which makes a
ıan covetous, and inclines him to wrong another
an for his own advantage, makes him likewise
vhen the scales are changed) unwilling that another
an should wrong him: That self-conceit which
akes a man proud, and apt to scorn and despise o-
ers, makes him unwilling that another should con-
mn him.

I question not but by this time you understand the
eaning of the rule; but we are not yet past all diffi-
ılties about it: Three things are to be done, before
is rule will be of use to us.

1. We must make it appear, that it is reasonable.

2. Make it certain, for till it be certain it cannot be
rule.

3. Make it practicable.

1. We must make it appear to be reasonable. The
fficulty about the reasonableness of it is this: Ac-
ɔrding to this rule I shall be obliged to do that many
nes which is sinful, and to omit that which is a
:cessary duty. I will give two or three instances:
ıul would have had his armour-bearer to have killed
m; might he therefore have killed his armour-bear-
, if he had been willing, and had desired it? I may
ɔt be an instrument or furtherer of another man's sin,
ıough I were so wicked as to desire that another
ould be so to me. If I were a child, I would not
ıve my father correct me; or a malefactor, I would
ɔt have the magistrate cut me off: must there there-
fore

fore be no correction or puniſhment? Now becau
of theſe, and the like inſtances which may be give
the rule is neceſſarily to be underſtood of things th
may be done or omitted, *i. e.* which are not unlaw
or unreaſonable. Saul might not kill his armour-beare
I may not further another man's ſin in the caſes pr
pounded, becauſe theſe things may not be done; th
are morally impoſſible, that is, unlawful. A parent
magiſtrate may not wholly omit correction or puniſ
ment, becauſe ſuch omiſſion would tend to the ruin
good manners, and of human ſociety.

2. We muſt make the rule certain. The difficul
about the certainty of it is this: Everlaſting diſput
will ariſe about what is lawful and reaſonable, and u
lawful and unreaſonable. Now we muſt reduce it
a certainty thus: Whatever I would that anoth
ſhould do to me, that I ſhould do to him, unleſs t
thing be plainly and evidently unlawful or unreaſonabl
And this cuts off all diſputes: For though there m
be perpetual diſputes about what is lawful and reaſo
able, or the contrary, yet there can be no diſpu
about the unlawfulneſs and unreaſonableneſs of tho
things which are plainly and evidently ſo; for th
which is plain and evident, is out of all diſpute. T
confirm this, let us conſider another text, Phil. iv.
where the Apoſtle exhorts Chriſtians to *follow what*
ver things are true, and honeſt, and juſt, and pur
and as a diſcovery of what things are ſuch, he ad
whatever things are lovely, of good report, and prai
worthy; that is, whatever things are amiable, w
ſpoken of, and praiſed by wiſe and good men (w
are the only competent judges of theſe things) if th
be not plainly contrary to truth, or honeſty, or juſtic
or purity, follow theſe things: and if this be not t
meaning, thoſe words, *lovely, of good report, prai*
worthy, are ſuperfluous, and do not at all direct o
converſation, which certainly the Apoſtle intended
do by them.

3. We muſt make it practicable. There are tw
things which make the practice of it difficult:

1.

1. A seeming contradiction in the rule.
2. Partiality in judging of the circumstances of others conditions and our own.

1. A seeming contradiction in the rule; which you ll see in these instances: If I desire a thing, I would t have another stand in competition with me for it. another desire a thing, I would not have him think ich that I stand in competition with him. If I be lebted to another, I would not have him arrest me: another be indebted to me, I would not have him nk much that I arrest him. When we sell, we care t how dear: When we buy, we care not how cheap. w if this were a real contradiction in the rule, it re impossible it should be put in practice; but it is y a contradiction in our wills, which must thus be onciled to the rule.

(1.) We must consider which of these wills is most sonable, and the greater reason and equity must carry and that which is plainly unreasonable, in compaon of the other, is not to be regarded. If we con-er the two first instances, this is most reasonable, at where men have an equal right, they should be owed an equal liberty to use that right; another man h as much right to stand in competition with me for thing, as I to stand in competition with him; and arrest me in case of debt, as I to arrest him: and it lainly unreasonable that I should use this right, and other be debarred from it.

(2.) If both these contradictory wills be plainly unsonable, as in the third instance of buying and sell-, they must be accommodated by finding out such nedium as is equally and mutually good for all yers and sellers; that is, such a proportion of gain y be taken, and must be allowed to be taken, as ll be equally and mutually good for all buyers and lers.

2. Another difficulty in the practice of this rule aeth from mens partiality in judging of the circumnces of other mens conditions and their own. e are apt to lessen the circumstances of another n's condition, and to over-value our own; another

ther man's concernments seem less to us than they a
and our own greater than they are. Now this difficu
will most eminently appear in cases of passion and
tereſt, and those subordinate relations which are at
greatest distance. Another man provokes me, I reve
myself on him; one asks me, Would you be conten
to be thus dealt withal? I am ready to answer, Yea
I should so provoke another; I aggravate the fault
his provocation, and lessen that of my own reven
here is passion. I desire a courtesy of a man which
cannot conveniently do for me; he denies me; I th
much at him, because I judge the courtesy less, and
obligation to do it greater than indeed it is; here is
tereſt. I think, If I were a father, I should not ca
myself so severely towards my children; if I wer
master, I should give more liberty to servants, and
them with a greater familiarity; if I were a minister
should not gall the consciences of people by so free
open a reproof of sin; if I were a magistrate, I sho
make other laws, or punish some crimes more or
severely. Now if men frequently thus mis-judge, h
shall this rule be put in practice?

To remove these difficulties, as much as may
and to make the practice of this rule more easy;
serve these rules:

1. Labour to understand truly every man's conditi
so far as you have opportunity. This is easily said,
how shall we come to do it? Thus, when you are
any condition, observe diligently the motions of y
own mind, and how your affections then work, a
what apprehensions you then have of things, and wh
it is that in such a condition you desire, and expect fr
others; and labour to remember this when you are
of that condition, and to retain the sense which y
then had of things.

2. In cases wherein you are unexperienced, a
which you cannot reasonably be presumed to und
stand, partly because of your distance from that co
dition, partly because of the opposition of your o
interest, and partly because of the mists and clouds
your own passion; trust the concurrent experience of
th

ers who are in that condition, and think that you ight not to do that to another, which the generality mankind count grievous; and that fit to be done, nich the most and wisest in such a condition and lation do usually expect. If men, when they are ider, and ly at the mercy of others, generally desire at clemency and moderation should be used towards em, how just soever thou mayest think thy severity , and that thou wouldst be contented that another ould deal so with thee; yet do not trust thy present prehensions of things, but believe that thou wilt ve the same sense of things, when they ly heavy upon ee, with the rest of mankind; and when thou art in eir circumstances, thou wilt desire quarter as they do.

like manner, that respect and obedience which pa- nts, and masters, and magistrates do generally expect ven the best and wisest of them) that do thou pay to em; and though it may have some appearance of ri- ur and injustice, yet believe that when thou comest be in the same relation, thou wilt expect the same ings as they do; and that thou dost now judge herwise, proceeds from thy inexperience or distance om that condition, or from passion and opposition of tereſt.

3. Conclude that in cases betwixt superiors and in- riors, the partiality is usually on the inferior's side; id it is reasonable thus to conclude, both because feriors have seldom had experience of the other con- tion, as superiors usually have had; (A child hath ot been a parent, or a servant ordinarily a master, r a subject a magistrate; but all parents have been ildren, and most masters have been servants, and any magistrates subjects, and so they have had ex- erience of both conditions) and likewise because iferiors cannot so well see the condition and circum- ances of those that are above them, as those that are bove can of those that are below them; they have ne advantage of ground, and better opportunities of nowledge.

4. In judging of your present condition and circum- ances, always abate something for the presence of them,

and

and for self-love, and self-interest, and other passio
He that doth not consider how apt every man is u
qually to favour himself, doth not know the littlen
and narrowness of human nature. We are near
ourselves, and our own interest is near to us, and
see it in its full proportions, and with all possi
advantages; other men and their interests are a
distance from us, and seem less to us than they a
Now we must make abatements for this, according
that experience which we have had of our own m
takes; which, if we will observe, as we pass from c
condition into another, we may easily be convinced h
great many times they are.

II. For the *Grounds* of this: The equity of t
rule stands upon these foundations:

1. All men are equal in many things, and those t
greatest things. Now I should deal equally with h
whom I acknowledge to be mine equal. *Have we n
all one father? hath not one God created us?* M
ii. 10. Are we not all made of the same material
Is it not appointed for all men once to die, Heb. i
27. and after death to stand before the impartial jud
ment of God? We have all the same notions of rig
and wrong; we are all obnoxious to one another, a
may be all beneficial one to another; we all love ou
selves, and study the advancement of our interest a
happiness. Thus far equal.

2. In most of those things wherein we are unequa
the inequality is not considerable, so as to be a groun
of any unequal dealing with one another. As
strength of body, whatever the difference be, the i
equality is not considerable, because as to the greate
effects of strength there is an equality: every m
that will venture his own life, may take away an
ther man's, either by open force or by surprize *. A
to *abilities of mind* (which we usually call *Parts*
there is originally a great equality, especially if th
received opinion be true, that *souls are equal*: An

* *Dominus est alterius vitæ quicunque contemn
suam.*

s the French Philosopher Des Cartes has ingeniously bserved, there is this notable sign of the equality of ens understandings; *Nulla res* (saith he) *æquabili- r inter homines distributa est, quàm bona mens*, &c. "Nothing is more equally divided among men, than a good understanding. Men will acknowledge others to be richer and stronger than themselves; few will acknowledge others to be wiser, or to have better parts than themselvess †. Every man thinks himself to have so good a proportion of parts and wisdom, that even those who are most covetous, and have the most insatiable desires as to other things, and when nature could never satisfy in any thing else, yet would not desire to have more wit than they have, or exchange their parts with any man." Now ere is no better sign of an equal distribution of things, an that every man is contented with his share. *Now cause all men generally think thus, it is to be pre- med that all are not deceived; but that there is some al equality, which is the ground of this conceit.* A fference indeed must be granted, but which ariseth ually from one of these two cases, either an *unequal ercise of our parts, or an unequal temper of body.* ow those who are so happy as to exercise their un- erstandings more than others, are very often rather nceited that they are wiser than others, than really '; *for the greatest clerks are not always the wisest men:* hose who are unhappy in the temper of their bodies, e thereby inclined, how weak soever they be, to con- it themselves as wise as others. So that whatever al inequality there be, conceit levels all again. So that hether men be really wise, or only think themselves , it makes no difference as to mens dealing one with nother; for they that think themselves equal, will t deal but upon equal terms. So that Aristotle's pret- notion, That *wise men are born to govern, and fools obey* †, signifies very little in this case; for there are

* *Differtat de metho do.*

† *Qui velit ingenio cedere rarus est.*

‡ *Politic. c.* 3.

but few ſuch fools in the world, but would govern they can. So that by virtue of wiſdom or parts, n man can challenge a privilege or prerogative to hin ſelf above others, which another will not pretend r as well as he.

3. In all thoſe things wherein men are unequa the inequality is not fixed and conſtant, but mutab and by turns. All things that belong to us, are eith the *endowments of the mind*, the *accidents of the b dy*, or the *circumſtances of our outward eſtate:* No thoſe that are moſt unequal in any of theſe, may t equal; for the inequality may turn, and be as muc on the other ſide. A diſeaſe may ruin the moſt ha py and excellent memory, and make a man forget h own name; a little knock on one ſide of the hea may level the higheſt *underſtanding* with the meaneſt *beauty*, *health*, and *ſtrength* may be blaſted by a di eaſe, or [a thouſand other accidents; *riches* and *h nour*, and *reputation*, are the moſt ſlippery and britt things that belong to us; and when theſe are gon *friends* will fall off like leaves in autumn. Now wh ſhould I deſpiſe another man, when I may be as ſill as he; or bear down another by my ſtrength, whe I may be as weak as he; or inſult over another's po and low condition, when a day may level me with h meanneſs, and raiſe him to be as great and rich as I am

4. Another ground is, *the mutual and univerſal quity and advantage of this rule*. Upon thoſe term I and all men ſhall be equally dealt with; it will b well with me, and well with all men. The obſe vation of this rule would ſecure peace to the world and if it were generally practiſed, thoſe few that ſhoul offend againſt it would be looked upon as the peſts an troublers of human ſociety. As by the violation o this rule every man becomes a *wolf* and *beaſt of pre* to another, ſo by the obſervation of it, every m would be a *God* to another; men would be full of mu tual goodneſs, and pity, and compaſſion; they woul be mutual benefactors one to another. All men woul be as happy as it is poſſible for them to be in this world

an

d no man could be miserable if it were in the power his neighbour to help him.

5. The last ground I shall mention is, *The absurdity and the inconvenience of the contrary.*

And this is the most proper way of proving this; r, as Aristotle tells us, *First principles, which are ident by their own light, cannot be proved by way demonstration, but of conviction:* As thus, *Contradictions cannot be true at once;* this cannot be demonstrated *à priori,* because there is nothing true before it, to prove it by; therefore whoever shall deny must be convinced of the truth of it, by shewing the absurdities of the contrary. In like manner this ng one of the first principles of human society, That should use no more liberty towards other men than would allow them to use towards us; the best way convince any man of the reasonableness and equity it, will be to shew him the inconveniencies of the trary. Wherever this principle is violated, men think themselves injured; where men are injured, y will be apt to vindicate themselves: Hence come tention and wars, which loose the bands of human ety; or if a man can pardon an injury that hath ived one, yet he that hath done it cannot believe but he will fear revenge; and fear of being opst, makes a man seek to anticipate and prevent anr: so that every injury endangers the peace and rity of mankind, and lays the foundation of perual mischief; for by the same reason that I injure man, I am obliged to ruin him.

He that breaks this rule, doth what he can to break an society; that is, to spoil himself of all com- protection, and to leave himself to stand upon his d against all the world; in which state no man can e to continue, that is not wiser and stronger than he world. Aristotle tells us, *He that desires to lone, must either be a God, or a wild beast* †; that he must either be self-sufficient, and stand in need nothing; or else be wild and savage, and delight ruelty and mischief.

† Ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός. *Pol. c.* 3.

III. The instances wherein we ought chiefly to prac tise this rule, are these:

1. In matters of *civil respect and conversation*, must treat every man with that fair respect I woul have another to shew me. We must accommodate our selves to mens particular tempers, and not be frowar or intractable, or tenacious of our own humour, esp cially when it lies in another man's way: but we mu be apt to recede and give way, that there may l room for other men's tempers and humours, as well ours; our humour must not take up all the worl Those who want this complaisance, are in society (one ingeniously compares them) like irregular ston in a building, which are full of roughness and corner they take up more room than they fill; till they be polis ed and made even, others cannot ly near them: men of sharp and perverse humours are unsociable, t the ruggedness and asperities of their nature l taken off. We must not carry ourselves insolentl or superciliously, or contemptuously towards other we must not be contumelious; nor by deed or wor countenance or gesture, declare hatred or contem of others. We must not upbraid one another wi any imperfection, or weakness, or deformity; we m not peremptorily contradict others, we must not use talk things displeasing to others, wherein their cr dit, or relations, or (especially) their religion is concer ed. Josephus says this was one of Moses's laws was a good one whosoever it was) οὔς ἄλλαι πόλ νομόζουσι θεους μηδεὶς βλασφημείτω; *Let no man bl pheme that which other nations count a God* †, make their religion. Not but that every man may co fute a false religion, and endeavour by all fair wa to convince a Jew, or Turk, or heathen; but we m not reproach another man's religion, or provoke a man in ordinary conversation, by unseasonable and u civil reflections upon it: for we are with meekness convince gainsayers, to reprove men for their sins, b not to upbraid them with them: We must give no c fence to the Jew or to the Gentile, remembering wa

† *Antiquit. Judaic. lib.* 4.

ays that the wrath of man doth not work the righteous-
ess of God; and that Michael the Arch-angel, when
e contended with the Devil, did not bring a railing
ccusation against him; he did not revile him, no not
n the heat of dispute. And there is great reason why
e should thus carry ourselves towards others, because
e ourselves would not be contemned or despised; we
ould not have any man jeer us, or insult over us, or
pbraid us, or peevishly contradict us, or affront us by
eaking unhandsomely of us, or of our relations, or
ur religion. Now if we would have others to consider
s, we must not neglect them; if we would be taken
otice of for somebody, we must not overlook others
ith contempt. Every thing thinks itself considerable;
nd there is nothing comes sooner to us, or continues
nger with us, than a sense of our own worth; and
e judge ill of human nature, if we think another man
not as impatient of rude and uncivil usage as we are.
othing would be despised, a worm would not be trod
on; nay, men do usually overvalue themselves, and
e apt to think that they are owners of that singular
orth, which may command respect from all men;
d that every one that passeth by ought to fall down,
d do obeisance to them: they have Joseph's dream
king; they think *all mens sheaves bow to their*
eaves; they think every man takes notice of them,
d observes their carriage and actions, when pro-
bly not one of a thousand ever took them into consi-
ration, or ask'd who they were. Now we must con-
er, that it is a hundred to one but there is a little
this vanity in us also, and that we do usually look
more respect than is due; therefore it will not
amiss in our respects towards others, *largiri ali-*
id, to give men something above what we think
y deserve; and the rather, because civil respect is
ap, and costs us nothing, and we expect from
ers full as much as comes to our share; for it is
istake to think that we do but righteously esteem
lves, and that we have no more than a just value of
own worth.

2. In matters of kindness and courtesy, we must be useful to one another. I would have no man churlish to me, but ready to gratify me, and to do me a kindness. Do I think much to be denied a reasonable favour; and doth not another so too? We would have all men to love us, that is, bear such an affection to us, that when it falls in their way, they should be ready to do us a courtesy. We would not have courtesies done in a discourteous manner, extorted by importunity, or upbraided to us afterwards. Let us likewise dispense favours with a liberal hand and a chearful countenance, that men may see that they come from a kind heart, and a real good will.

3. In matters of charity and compassion: If any man be in misery, pity him, and help him to your power; if any man be in necessity and want, contribute to his relief, without too scrupulous inquiries about him; for we would be thus dealt with ourselves, we would not have others to harden their hearts, or shut up their bowels of compassion against us. Is any man cast down, do not insult over him, and trample upon him; do not look upon him with scorn, and rejoice over him in the day of distress. *Res est sacra miser;* "Persons in misery are sacred, and not "to be violated." When you see any man in calamity, think ye hear him say to you with Job, *I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's stead: I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you: but I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief,* Job xvi. 4, 5.

4. In matters of forbearance and forgiveness. We stand in need of forbearance and pardon from others, from God and men; we should be loth God should take advantage against us upon every provocation, and let fly at us with a thunderbolt every time we offend him. We would not have men storm and fall into passion with us upon every slight occasion: I would have great allowances given to me; I would have my ignorance, and inadvertency, and mi

takes, and present temper, and all occasions and provocations, and every thing considered. And when have done amiss, upon acknowledgment of my fault, would be forgiven and received to favour. Now if would be thus dealt with, we must bear with others; the best men need some grains of allowance, *nullum unquam ingenium placuit sine venia;* no man is ever so perfect, so accomplished, so unexceptionable, but there was something or other in his carriage that needed pardon. Every man hath a particular humour, we must give some allowance for that; every man is subject to mistake, we must allow for that too; and if a man have committed a fault, we must accept of an ingenuous acknowledgment, and be ready to grant him peace. There is a shame and disdain in human nature of too vile a submission, therefore we must not bring a man too low when we have him at advantage.

5. In matters of report, and representation of other men and their actions. We must not take up a rash prejudice, or entertain a sinister apprehension of any upon slight grounds. Do not represent any man, his words or actions, at a disadvantage: make the best of every thing. A man's good name is like a looking-glass, nothing is sooner cracked, and every breath can tully it. Handle every man's reputation with the same tenderness thou wouldst have every man use towards thine. Do not slander or defame any man, or rejoice to hear other mens miscarriages ript open: do not account it an entertainment to censure and backbite all the world.

6. In matters of trust and fidelity. Where I place a confidence, and repose a trust, I would not be deceived; I must not deceive another, nor let any man fall that leans upon me. If a man trust me with the management of his business, or lodge a secret with me, or put his life into my power, or commit the care of his estate or children to me after his death; these are ingenuous trusts, and must be discharged with the same faithfulness we expect from others.

7. In

7. In matters of duty and obedience. We m
give that honour to our parents, which we would e
pect from our children; and pay that reverence to m
sters, which we would exact from our servants. W
must rise up before the grey head, and give respect
old age; for let us not think, but that the change
relation and of age, will have the same effect upon
which it hath upon the rest of the world. It is a foll
to talk that when we are old, we shall be pleased wit
the insolencies of youth; when we are masters, we sha
not be at all offended with the contemptuous carriag
of our servants; that it will not touch our hearts t
have our children undutiful, and void of respect, to s
the fruit of our body unnatural and unkind to us.

8. In matters of freedom and liberty, which are n
determined by any natural or positive law. We mu
permit as much to others, as we assume to ourselves
and this is a sign of an equal and temperate perso
and one that justly values his own understanding an
power. But there is nothing wherein men usually dea
more unequally with one another, than in indifferen
opinions and practices of religion. I account that a
indifferent opinion which good men differ about; no
that such an opinion is indifferent as to truth or error,
but as to salvation or damnation, it is not of necessary
belief. By an indifferent practice in religion, I mean
that which is in its own nature neither a duty, nor a
sin to do or omit. Where I am left free, I would not
have any man to rob me of my liberty, or intrench
upon my freedom; and because he is satisfied such a
thing is lawful and fit to be done, expect I should do it
who think it otherwise; or because he is confident such
an opinion is true, be angry with me because I cannot
believe as fast as he. Now if another do ill in doing
thus to me, I cannot do well in doing so to another.
And do not say that thou art sure thou art in the right,
and he that differs from thee, in the wrong; and there-
fore thou mayest impose upon him, though he may not
upon thee. Hath not every man this confidence of his
own opinion and practice? And usually the weakest
cause

use bears up with the greatest confidence. Now if ou wouldst not have another, who is confident he in the right, impose upon thee, do not thou impose on another for all thy confidence. We should rather be modest, and say every one to ourselves, " How came I to be so much wiser than other men? Which way came the Spirit of the Lord from so many wise and pious men, to speak unto me? Is it a peculiar privilege granted to me, that I cannot be mistaken? Or are not they most of all mistaken, who think they cannot mistake? If then I be but like other men, why should I take so much upon me, as if my understanding were to be a rule, and my apprehensions a standard to the whole world? As if when another man differs from me, I did not differ as much from him. Why may not another man understand the thing better than I do, or what crime is it if he understand them not so well? Were all mens understandings cast in the same mold? Is it presumption for any man to know more than I do, or a sin to know less? Job doth well reprove this self-conceit, Job xii. 2." His friends would needs bear m down, and were very angry with him that he was ot of their mind, and would not acknowledge all to e true of himself which they said against him. He kes them up sharply: *No doubt ye are the people, nd wisdom shall die with you, but I have under- anding as well as you, and I am not inferior to you: Vho knoweth not such things as these?* Let not any an think that he hath engrossed all the knowledge of he world to himself, but others know the same hings which he doth, and many things better than he.

9. In matters of commerce, and contracts which rise from thence. Now a contract is a mutual transferring of right. When I buy any thing of another, ie makes over the right of such a commodity to me or so much money, or other valuable thing, the right whereof I make over to him. Now in this kind of intercourse, we are to be governed by this great rule. In making of contracts we must agree *bona fide*, deal honestly and truly: in performing of contracts we must

must *liberare fidem*, satisfy the engagement we hav made, for thus we ourselves would be dealt withal.

Now if any shall desire to be more particularly satisfied, "What that exact righteousness is which in matter of contracts ought to be observed betwixt man and man?" I must confess this is a difficult question and to be handled very modestly by such as acknowledge themselves unacquainted with the affairs of the world, and the necessities of things; and the particular and hidden reasons of some kind of dealings; for he who is ignorant of these, may easily give rules which will not comply with the affairs of the world. He may complain of that which cannot be otherwise, and blame some kind of dealings which are justifiable from particular reasons, not obvious to any man who is unseen in the way of trade. Besides, there are many cases fall under this question which are very nice, but of great consequence; and the greater caution and tenderness ought to be used in the resolution of them, because they are matters of constant practice, and the greatest part of mankind are concerned in them. Now it is a dangerous thing to mistake in those things in which many persons are interested, especially if they be things of such a vast difference, as good and evil, right and wrong are; for if that be determined to be lawful, which is unlawful, men are led into sin; if that be determined to be unlawful, which is lawful, men are led into a snare: for if this determination be to the prejudice of men in their callings, it is an hundred to one but common example and private interest will make many continue in that practice; and then the mischief is this, though men do that which is lawful and right, yet they are staggered by the authority and confidence of him who hath determined it unlawful, and so have some reluctancy in their consciences in the doing of it, and this by accident becomes a great sin to them. And when upon a sick bed, or any other occasion, they come to be touched with the sense of sin, this will be matter of greater horror and affrightment to them than a real sin which they committed igno-

norantly, and were afterward convinced of. Upon these considerations, I ought to proceed with great rineſs in the answering of this question; therefore I ll content myself with speaking those things which : clear and evident, though they be but general, her than venture out of my depth, by descending o particulars, and such things as are out of my no- e.

I shall therefore,

1. Lay down the general *rule*.
2. Some *propositions* which may tend to the expli- ion of it.
3. Some special rules for the directing of our com- rce and intercourse.

1. The general *rule* is this, "That which is not unreasonable for me to desire to gain by another when I am to sell, that I should allow another to gain by me when I am to buy; and that which is not unreasonable another should gain by me when I am to buy, that and no more I may gain by another when I am to sell."

2. The *propositions* which I shall lay down for the ther explication of this rule, are these:

(1.) *In buying and selling, such a proportion of gain y be taken, and ought to be allowed, as is mutually l universally best.* And this every man is presumed desire, because this will be certainly good for every ; whereas if it be not universally good, it may be l for any one; if it be not mutually so, it will be l for me by turns.

(2.) *That proportion of gain which allows a reason- e compensation for our times, and pains, and ha- d, is universally and mutually best.* If the com- sation be unreasonably great, it will be bad for the er; if unreasonably little, it will be bad for the sell- if equal and reasonable, it will be good for all.

(3.) *That proportion of gain, which, in common ercourse and use of bargaining among those who derstand what they buy and sell, is generally al- ed, ought to be esteemed a reasonable compensation.* is is evident, because the common reason of man- kind

kind doth best determine what is reasonable; therefo
those who speak of *commutative justice*, and place
in the equality of things contracted for, need explai
ing; for *value* is not a thing *absolute* and *certain*, b
relative and *mutable*. Now to fix the value of thin
as much as may be, this *rule* is commonly given, *Ta
ti unumquodque valet, quanti vendi potest; Ev
thing is worth so much as it may be sold for:* whi
must not be understood too particularly, as if the pr
sent and particular appetite of the contractor were
be the rule; for every thing is not worth so much
any body will give for it, but so much as in comm
intercourse among knowing persons it will give. F
this I take for a truth, that in the ordinary plenty
commodities, there is an ordinary and usual price
them known to the understanding persons of every pr
fession; if I be out in this, the matter of gain will
more uncertain than I thought of.

(4.) *A reasonable compensation doth not consist
an indivisible point, but hath a certain latitude, whi
likewise is to be determined by the common intercou
and practice of men.* Suppose ten in the hundred
the usual gain made of such a commodity, eleven t
highest, nine the lowest; the latitude is betwixt ni
and eleven.

(5.) *Every man engaged in a way of commerce,
presumed to understand it, unless the contrary be ev
dent.* So that, keeping within the latitude of a lawf
gain, I may use my skill against another man in drivi
a bargain; but if his want of skill be evident, that
sufficiently known to me, I must use him as I would
a child, or other unskilful person, that is, fairly.

(6.) *Where the price of things alters* (as it oft
doth almost in all things) *no other rule can be giv
but the common and market-price.* There are son
things which are fixedly certain, as coin, there I ha
no latitude at all; I may not put off a piece of m
ney for more than its value, though a person out
ignorance would take it for more. There are son
commodities which in ordinary plenty, being of o
dinary goodness, have an usual price; here I ha

b

ut little latitude, *viz.* that of the market. In the ri-
ng and falling of commodities I have a greater la-
tude, but usually in these cases the market sets some
ind of price, unless I be the sole master of a com-
iodity; and here the latitude is the greatest, and my
wn reason and moderation must limit me. And if a-
y ask why I make the market the rule, seeing this
ems to be as if I should say, Let every man get as
uch as he can, for so men in the market do; I an-
wer, The market is usually more reasonable than the
articular appetites of men; and though every man
e apt to get as much as he can, yet men generally
ave an appetite to sell, as well as to sell dear, and
iat checks this; and men are brought to moderati-
n, because they are unwilling to lose custom; so
iat he who governs himself by the market-prices, not
itching at particular advantages, seems to me to fol-
ow the safest rule.

(7.) *There are some things allowed in common in-
rcourse, which are so rigorous, that they are hardly
ist*, which are rather tolerable than commendable. I
ill give one instance instead of many: A man hath a
nall piece of ground lying within another man's e-
ate, he is willing to sell, but requires (possibly) for-
y or sixty years purchase, or more, according to the
articular appetite of the purchaser. This seems not to
e so agreeable to this great rule of equity; I doubt
ot but some advantage may be made in this case,
nd I will not set any peremptory limits; I shall on-
y say this in general, we should set a moderate value
pon another mans appetite and convenience.

(8.) *It is to be feared, that something very like un-
ighteousness is woven into the mysteries of most trades;*
nd like Phidias's image in Minerva's shield, cannot
e defaced without the ruin of it. I think this is
ot a groundless jealousy, but the confession and
omplaint of the most knowing and understanding
ersons in most human affairs; I shall instance only
n the slightness of work, the imbasing of commo-
lities, and setting them off by indirect advantages.
can only bewail this; for unless the world could
enerally be convinced of this, it is not like to be a-

mended. Perfection is not to be looked for in this imperfect state, we must be content if things are passible.

(9.) *Nevertheless we ought to aspire after as great a degree of righteousness and equity, as the condition of human affairs will admit.* We should bend all our endeavours to the bettering of the world, and not only avoid all unrighteousness, but draw back as much as in us lies, from the indirect practices of the world, and from all appearance of unrighteousness.

3. The more particular rules are these;

(1.) *Impose upon no man's ignorance or unskilfulness.* Thou mayest set a just value upon thine own commodity, but not a price upon another man's head. I mean thou mayest not rate a man's want of understanding, or set a tax upon his ignorance; therefore take no advantage of children, or any other incompetent persons, and do not only use them with justice, but with ingenuity, as those that repose a trust in you, and cast themselves upon your equity. And here are some questons to be resolved.

Quest. 1. *If a man be otherwise skilful in his calling, may not I take advantage of his ignorance of a particular circumstance wherein the contract is concerned?*

Answ. I will tell you how Tully resolves this in a particular case; "A man, says he, † brings a ship of "corn from Alexandria to Rhodes, in a time of great "famine; he may have what price he will, he knows "of a great many more ships that will be there "next day; may he conceal this from the Rhodi-"ans? "He determines peremptorily he may not. If we will be worse than Heathens---------- I say no more.

Quest. 2. *But may we not take advantage of the ignorance of the seller, though not of the buyer?* The difference is, he that offers to sell any thing at such a price, is willing so to part with it; now there is no wrong done to him that is willing.

I answer, *A man is so far willing, as he is knowing*; Aristotle tells us, *That ignorance is a sort of unwilling-*

† De officiis. l. 3.

illingness. If a man out of forgetfulness, or want f consideration, or sufficient understanding of his own alling, mistake himself, I may not make a prize f this man's weakness, for he is only willing to sell it upon supposition he remembers right, and under-ands himself aright; but the thing being really worth ore, he is absolutely unwilling, and I am injurious to im in taking advantage.

Quest. 3. *May I not sell secret faults and vices in a ommodity?*

Answ. If the faults be such as men take for grant-d do often happen, and notwithstanding them they o not account any man to have deceived them, then ey are faults pardoned by common consent; but if ey be such as I am grieved at, and think myself not irly dealt withal when they happen, then some think is enough to allow for them in the price. But I ink Tully hath determined it better: † *Ne quid nnino quod venditor novit emptor ignoret, That the yer should not be left ignorant of any thing that the ller knows.* And this seems reasonable, for I know t but another man may value those faults higher than do; however it is not so fair for me, to make ano-er man's bargain.

(2.) *Impose upon no man's necessity.* If a man must eds buy now, or of thee, because none else is near, ake no advantage of this.

(3.) *When God's provide ce hath put into thy hands me great opportunity and advantage* (as by the inter-ntion of some unexpected law, by a sudden war or ace betwixt nations, or by some other casuality) *do t stretch it to the utmost. Fortunam reverenter ha-, Use this providential advantage modestly;* consi-ering that he whose blessing gave thee this opportuni-, can blast thee a thousand ways.

(4.) *Use plainness in all your dealings.* This the oman laws called *bonâ fide agere.* Do not dispa-ge another man's commodity, or raise your own sides truth, this is sinful: Do not insinuate a com-

† Offic. l. 3.

commendation or disparagement indirectly, thereby to lead a man into an error, that you may draw on a bargain the more easily: Do not (as your phrase is) ask or bid much out of the way; for if this be not simply unlawful, yet it doth not become an honest man. We commend the Quakers, because they are at a word in all their dealings; we would be loth not to be counted as good Christians as they are. Let us then do as good things as they do, especially when we account those things praise-worthy; and I am sure this is no ways contrary to justice, and honesty, and truth. I know nothing that gives so real a reputation to that sect as this practice: And would it not adorn those who account themselves the more sober Christians? If we praise this in others, let us practise it in ourselves. We are apt to value ourselves much by our orthodox judgments; but let us take heed that sectaries do not confute us by their orthodox lives. For the sake of religion, next to your consciences, in all your dealings tender your reputation: For *quod conscientia est apud Deum, id fama est apud homines;* "That which conscience is in reference to God, that our reputation is in respect of men.

(5.) *In matters of vanity and fancy, and things which have no certain estimation, use moderation;* and so much the rather, because in these thou art left to be thy own judge.

(6.) *Do not go to the utmost of things lawful.* He that will always walk upon the brink, is in great danger of falling down: He that will do the utmost of what he may, will sometime or other be tempted to what he should not; for it is a short and easy passage from the utmost limits of what is lawful, to what is evil and unlawful: Therefore in that latitude which you have of gain, use *favour towards the poor and necessitous, ingenuity towards the ignorant and unskilful, and moderation towards all men.*

(6.) *Where you have any doubt about the equity of dealings, choose you the safest part, and that which will certainly bring you peace:* For not only a good conscience, but a quiet conscience is to be valued above

ove gain. Therefore in matters of duty do the most; n matters of privilege and divisions of right, and proortions of gain, (where there is any doubt) choose the east; for this is always safe.

Thus I have laid down the rule, and explained it, nd have given as particular directions as I could safely dventure to do: I must now leave it to every man, o apply it more particularly to himself, and to deal ithfully with his own conscience in the use of it. Circumstances which vary cases are infinite; therefore hen all is done, much must be left to the equity and hancery of our own breasts. I have not told you how uch in the pound you may gain, and no more, nor n I: A man may make a greater gain at one time an another, of the same thing; he may take those dvantages which the change of things, and the provience of God gives him, using them moderately: A an may take more of some persons than of others; rovided a man use all men righteously, he may use me favourably. But I have on purpose forborn to escend to too many particularities; among other reons, for the sake of Sir Thomas More's observation oncerning the casuists of his time, who (he saith) by eir too particular resolutions of cases, did not teach en *non peccare, not to sin*, but did shew them *quam rope ad peccatum liceat accedere sine peccato*, "how near men might come to sin, and yet not sin."

The uses I shall make of all this, are these two:

USE 1.

Let us not revenge ourselves: The rule is not, we ould do to others as they do to us, but as we would ave them to do to us: as if it were on purpose to preent revenge. St. Luke forbids revenge from this le, Luke vi. 31, 32. *for if you love them that love u*, &c. *but love your enemies*. Revenge is the reatest offence against this rule; for he that revengeth injury hath received one; he that has received one nows best what that is which he would not have anoher to do to him. The nature of evil and injury is etter known to the patient than to the agent: Men now better what they suffer, than what they do? he

that is injured, feels it, and knows how grievous it is; and will he do that to another?

USE 2.

Let me press this rule upon you: Live by it; in all your carriage and dealings with men, let it be present to you. Ask yourselves upon every occasion, Would I that another should deal thus with me, and carry himself thus towards me? But I shall press this chiefly as to justice and righteousness in our commerce. It is said† that Severus the Emperor caused this rule to be written upon his palace, and in all publick places; let it be written upon our houses, and shops and exchanges. This exhortation is not altogether improper for this auditory: You that frequent these exercises, seem to have a good sense of that part of religion which is contained in the first table; Do not, by your violations of the second, mar your obedience to the first; Do not prove yourselves hypocrites in the first table, by being wicked in the second: Give not the world just cause to say, That you are ungodly, because they find you to be unrighteous; but manifest your love to God whom you have not seen, by your love to your brother whom you have seen; and if any man wrong his brother, he cannot love him. Do not reject or despise this exhortation, under the contemptuous name of *morality*. Our Saviour tells us, this is a chief part of that which hath ever been accounted religion in the world, *it is the Law and the Prophets;* and he by enjoining it, hath adopted it into Christianity, and made it gospel. We should have an especial love to this precept, not only as it is the dictate of nature, and the law of Moses; not only as it is a Jewish and Gentile principle, but as it is of the *houshold of faith*. When the young man told Christ, that *he had kept the commandments from his youth*, it is said, *Jesus loved him*, Mark x. 20, 21. Wherever we have learnt to despise morality, Jesus loved it. When I read the Heathen writers, especially Tully and Seneca, and take notice what precepts of morality and laws of kindness are every where in their

† *Lampridius.*

eir writings, I am ready to fall in love with them. ow should it make our blood rise in many of our ces who are Christians, to hear with what strict- ss Tully determines cases of conscience, and how nerously he speaks of equity and justice towards l men †? *Societatis arctissimum vinculum est magis bitrari esse contra naturam, hominem homini de- ahere sui commodi causâ, quàm omnia incommoda bire:* "This is the strongest bond of society, to account it to be more against nature for any man to wrong another for his own advantage, than to undergo the greatest inconveniencies." And a- in, *Non enim mihi est vita mea utilior, quàm a- imi talis affectus, neminem ut violarem commodi ei gratiâ:* "Nor is my life more dear and profit- able to me, than such a temper and disposition of mind, as that I would not wrong any man for my own advantage." Again, *Tollendum est in rebus ntrahendis omne mendacium:* "No kind of lying must be used in bargaining." And to mention no ore, *Nec ut emat melius, nec ut vendat quicquam, mulabit aut dissimulabit vir bonus:* "A good man will not counterfeit or conceal any thing, that he may buy the cheaper, or sell the dearer." And et further, to check our proneness to despise mo- l righteousness, I cannot but mention an excellent assage to this purpose, which I have met with in a arned man ‡ of our own nation: "Two things (saith he) make up a Christian, a true faith, and an honest conversation; and though the former usually gives us the title, the latter is the surer: for true profession without an honest conversation not only saves not, but increaseth our weight of punishment; but a good life without true profes- sion, though it brings us not to heaven, yet it lessens the measure of our judgment: so that a moral man, so called, is a Christian by the surer side." And afterwards, "I confess, (saith he) I have not yet made that proficiency in the schools of our age, as that I could see why the second "table

† *Offic. lib.* 3.
‡ *Mr. Hales,*

" table, and the acts of it, are not as properly th
" parts of religion and Christianity, as the acts an
" observation of the first. If I mistake, then it i
" St. James that hath abused me; for he describin
" religion by its proper acts, tells us, That *pure re*
" *ligion, and undefiled before God and the Fathe*
" *is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in thei*
" *affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from th*
" *world:* So that that thing which in an especial refined
" dialect of the new Christian language, signifies no
" thing but morality and civility, that in the language
" of the Holy Ghost imports true religion." Mark
xii. 33, 34. When the Scribe told Christ, that *to love God with all the heart*, &c. *and our neighbour as ourselves, was more than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices;* (it is said) *When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* They that would have a religion without moral righteousness, talk indiscreetly, and are farther from the kingdom of God than a mere moral man. If we neglect this part of religion, we disparage the gospel, and abuse our profession; we are but pretenders to Christianity. Plutarch speaks somewhere to this purpose; " He had
" rather posterity should say, there was never such a
" man as Plutarch, than that he was a vicious, or cru-
" el, or unjust man.

I had rather a man should not call himself a Christian, that he should renounce his title, than that by his life and actions he should represent Christians to the world as oppressors, as unjust and treacherous dealers. If men will only use religion to cover their unrighteousness, I had rather they would put off their cloaks, and be knaves *in querpo*, that every body may know them, than that they should go like highwaymen in vizards and disguises, only that they may rob honest men the more securely.

And to move you to the practice of this rule, I shall only offer to you one consideration, but which hath so much weight in it, that it may be instead of many: *As you deal with others, so you shall be dealt with.* With what measure you mete to others, it shall,

ll be measured to you, is a proverbial speech often
d by our Saviour, and which one time or other you
ll find to be very significant. God doth many times
his providence order things so, that in this life
n's unrighteousness returns upon their own heads,
d their violent dealing upon their own pates. There
a divine *Nemesis* which brings our iniquities upon
rselves. No man hath any vice or humour alone,
t it may be matched in the world, either in its own
nd, or in another: If a man be cruel and insolent,
Bajazet shall meet with a Tamerlane: If a man
light to jeer and abuse others, *no man hath so good wit, but another hath as good a memory;* he will
member it to revenge it. He that makes a trade of
ceiving and cozening others, doth but teach others
cozen him; and there are but few masters in any
nd, but are outdone by some of their scholars. But
owever we may escape the hands of men, how shall
e escape our own consciences, either trouble of conscice in this life, or the worm of conscience in the next?
ow shall we escape the hands of the living God?
ow shall we escape the damnation of hell? 1 Thess.
. 6. *Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother
any matter, for God is the avenger of all such.* He
ill take their cause into his own hands, and render
us according to our cruel and fraudulent dealing
ith others: Matth. xviii. 35. *So likewise shall my
eavenly Father do also unto you,* &c. What our Sa-
our saith, Matth. xix. 29. That there is no man
at denies himself in houses and lands, *&c.* for
hrist's sake, and the gospel's, but shall receive in this
fe a hundred fold, and in the world to come everlastg life; is true also here: There is no man that is inurious to his brother, his houses, or lands, or good
ame, or any other thing. but shall probably receive
this world a hundred fold; however (without reentance) in the world to come everlasting misery. In
he next world men will find that they have but impoerished themselves by their ill-gotten wealth, and
eaped up for themselves treasures of wrath: Read
hose words, and tremble at them, Jam. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Go

Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl, for your mi sery shall come upon you, &c.

Let us then be persuaded, as we love God whom w have not seen, as we love the gospel which we rea and hear every day, and would preserve the reputatio of it; as we would better the world, and the condi tion of mankind; as we love ourselves, and our ow peace and happiness; to deal justly and equally wit all men. Till we come to live by this rule of equity we can never hope to see the world a quiet habitation But if this were practised among us, then *Glory would dwell in our land, mercy and truth would meet toge ther, righteousness and peace would kiss each other truth would spring out of the earth, and righteousnes would look down from heaven: yea, the Lord would give that which is good, and our land would yield her increase; righteousness would go before him, and se us in the way of his steps*, Psal. clxxxv. 9, 10, 11 12, 13.

To

TO THE

READER.

YOU have here an end of this great work, and I can assure you, that I have faithfully discharged what at first I promised, which was, to give u these sermons truly transcribed from the originals. I have sometimes put two sermons into one, three into two, (as the author used to do in those printed) and if on that account I have left out repetitions, or shortened some things which have been fore printed, yet I never altered either the words or nse, otherwise than was necessary for the connexion; id as I did this purely to make the work more perfect, hope I have rather obliged the publick, than deserved e censure of any.

By these sermons you have seen how good and usel a Preacher the author was: and though the pubhing of them was all I had to do, yet that the world ay see that he was devout as well as eloquent, I have ntured to annex some of his prayers, with a short scourse to his servants before the receiving of the sament, all written by his own hand. These are no eat addition to the work, and will, I hope, be dued by some, or, at the worst, can only be blamed the indiscreet zeal, rather than any interest or de-n of the publisher.

Brasted in Kent,
Dec. 3. 1703.

RA. BARKER.

PRAYERS

PRAYERS

Compoſed by

ARCHBISHOP *TILLOTSON*

To which is added,

A ſhort diſcourſe to his ſervants before the ſacrament.

A Prayer before the ſermon.

GReat and glorious Lord God! the high and holy one, who inhabiteſt eternity, and dwelleſt in that light which is not to be approached. We pray thee to look down from heaven, the habitation of thy holineſs and thy glory, upon us vile and ſinful creatures. Have mercy upon us, O Lord! and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out all our tranſgreſſions: And do thou keep it for ever in the purpoſe and reſolution of our hearts, to ſerve and fear thee for the future, and to keep all thy commandments always, that it may be well with us, and with our children after us. We pray thee to this end, to write thy law in our hearts, and to put thy fear into our inward parts, that we may never depart from thee.

Grant us the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to become every day better, to reform and amend whatever is amiſs in the frame and temper of our minds, or in the courſe and actions of our lives; to enable us to mortify our luſts, to govern our paſſions, and

order our whole converſation aright; to aſſiſt us to
l that is good, and to keep us from all evil, and to
reſerve us to thy heavenly kingdom.

We pray thee to inſtruct us in all the particulars of
ır duty, which we owe to thee and men; that we may
erein exerciſe ourſelves always to have conſciences
oid of offence both towards God and towards men;
ıat we may love the Lord our God with all our
earts, and with all our ſouls, and with all our ſtrength;
ıd may love our neighbour as ourſelves; and what-
er we would that men ſhould do unto us, that we may
o likewiſe unto them. And let the grace of God, which
th appeared to all men, and brings ſalvation, teach
, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we
ıy live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this
eſent world; waiting for the bleſſed hope and glo-
ous appearing of the great God and our Saviour Je-
; Chriſt, who gave himſelf for us, that he might re-
em us from all iniquity, and purify to himſelf a pe-
liar people, zealous of good works.

And we pray thee to make us ſenſible of our own
ilty, of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of this life,
l of the eternity of the next; to make us careful ſo
live, as we ſhall wiſh we had done when we come to
: let our loins always be girded about, and our
ıps burning, and we ourſelves like unto men that
it for their Lord.

We pray thee, with us, to extend thy goodneſs to
whole world. Let thy way be known upon earth,
l thy ſaving health among all nations. Pity and
ieve the miſeries and afflictions of men; eſpecially
ſe in our neighbour nations, who ſuffer for thy
th and righteouſneſs ſake. Support them, O Lord!
ler their ſufferings; and in thy due time deliver
m out of them. Bleſs thy church; reform what-
ver thou ſeeſt to be amiſs in the belief and lives of
riſtians, and grant that all thoſe who profeſs thy
ne, and the holy religion of our bleſſed Saviour
y live as it becomes the goſpel, and may depart from
iniquity.

In a particular manner we pray thee to be gracious to these sinful nations to which we are related; to pardon our great and crying sins, to prevent those judgments which our sins have justly deserved, and to spare us according to thy great mercy, In a more especial manner, we pray thee to pour down thy blessings upon thy servant and our sovereign,---- by thy grace King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, and in all causes and over all persons in these his dominions supreme governor. Preserve him in his person; make his government a publick blessing to these nations; let religion and righteousness flourish under the influences of it, and let there be abundance of peace in his days. Bless him in his royal relations,--------and all the royal family. And thou who art the wise God, and governest all the affairs of the world, be pleased so to bless and direct all publick counsels and affairs amongst us, as that they may tend to the advancement of thy glory, the preservation of religion, and the peace and happiness of these kingdoms. Bless, we pray thee, all ranks and orders of men amongst us, and make them all in their several places and stations useful and serviceable to thy glory and to the publick good. Bless those to whom thou hast committed the care of instructing and governing thy church, by what titles soever they are distinguished, Archbishops, Bishops, and all others that minister in holy things. We pray thee to make them faithful to that trust which thou hast committed unto them, and to grant that by their diligent labours and prudent carriage, and holy and exemplary lives, they may gain many unto righteousness. Bless the two Universities of this land; grant that they may answer the ends of their institution, that religion, and learning, and virtue, may be the glory of those places.

We pray thee to bless us thine unworthy servants who at this time are assembled and met together in thy name; to be present in the midst of us, and to assist us in the work and service which we are about; and to grant that those truths which shall be delivered

to

ous out of thy word, may have a due effect and influence upon our hearts and lives: All which we humbly beg of thee for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose holy name and words, *&c.*

A prayer, which (as the publisher conjectures) he used before his composing his sermons.

O Lord God of truth, I humbly beseech thee to enlighten my mind by thy holy Spirit, that I may discern the true way to eternal salvation; and to free me from all prejudice and passion, from every corrupt affection and interest that may either blind me or seduce me in my search after it.

Make me impartial in my inquiry after truth, and ready whenever it is discovered to me, to receive it for the love of it, to obey it from the heart, and to practise it in my life, and to continue stedfast in the profession of it to the end of my days.

I perfectly resign myself, O Lord, to thy conduct and direction, in confidence that thy mercy and goodness is such, that thou wilt not suffer those who sincerely desire to know the truth and rely upon thy guidance, finally to miscarry.

And if in any thing which concerns the true worship and service of thee my God, and the everlasting happiness of my soul, I am in any error and mistake, earnestly beg of thee to convince me of it, and to lead me into the way of truth; and to confirm and establish me in it daily more and more.

And I beseech thee, O Lord, always to preserve in me a great compassion and sincere charity towards those that are in error, and ignorance of thy truth; beseeching thee to take pity on them, and to bring them to the knowledge of it, that they may be saved.

And because our blessed Saviour hath promised, that all that do his will shall know his doctrine: Grant, O Lord, that I may never knowingly offend thee in any thing, or neglect to do what I know to be thy will and my duty.

Grant, O heavenly Father, these my humble and hearty requests, for his sake, who is the way, the truth, and the life, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Prayers used by him the day before his consecration.

MAY 30. 1691. *the day before my consecration to the Archbishoprick, which was on Whitsunday, at St. Mary-le-bow, when, on Whitsunday eve, I retired to Edmonton, to spend that day in fasting and prayer, to implore the blessing of Almighty God upon that action, and the assistance of his grace and Holy Spirit to be vouchsafed to his sinful and unworthy servant, whom his wise providence, and the importunate desire of their Majesties King William and Queen Mary, the best of Princes, (whom God in great mercy to a most sinful and perverse people, hath by a most signal providence set upon the throne of these kingdoms, and sent (I trust) to be our deliverers and benefactors for many generations yet to come) have called to the government and conduct of this miserable distracted church, in a very difficult and dangerous time.*

I began with a short prayer to Almighty God, to prepare my heart for the duty of this day, and to assist me in the discharge of it, in such a manner as might be acceptable in his sight, through Jesus Christ my blessed Saviour and Redeemer.

I proceed next to a thanksgiving to Almighty God for his mercy and goodness to me in the conduct of my whole life, from my first entrance into the world to this day, which was to this effect:

Almighty and eternal Lord God, and most merciful Father, I prostrate myself before thee this day, in a most humble and thankful acknowledgment of thy great mercy and goodness vouchsafed to me a sinful creature, and thy most unprofitable servant (not worthy to be called thy son) in the conduct of my whole life, from my first coming into the world to this present day.

And

And in the first place, I desire to bless thy great nd glorious name, that I was born of honest and eligious parents, though of a low and obscure con- lition. *Who am I, O Lord God, or what is my house, hat thou hast brought me hitherto? and hast regard- d me according to the estate of a man of high degree,) Lord God!* [1 Chron. xvii. 16, 17.]

I bless thee likewise for all the happy circumstances f my birth and education; that I was born in a time nd place wherein thy true religion was preached and rofessed. I bless thee for the great care of my good arents to bring me up in the knowledge and fear of hee, *the only true God*, and of *him whom thou hast nt, Jesus Christ, whom to know is eternal life;* and bless thee, my Lord, for him *in whom all the nations f the earth are blessed*, whom *in the fulness of time*, ou wast pleased to send into the world to be the aviour and redeemer of mankind.

I bless thee, that thou wast pleased to give my ever- onoured and good father the heart to give me, out of ie small estate thou gavest him, so liberal an educati- ı, whereby I was put into a capacity to serve thee. orgive, I beseech thee, O Lord, that I have made) better use of the talents and opportunities where- ith thou hast entrusted me, and accept of that little hich by thy grace I have been enabled sincerely to do r thee. I bless thee, O Lord, for the continual and ountiful support of thy providence, whereby thou hast so enabled me to return to my parents and their chil- en the kindness I received from them, and to be still as father to them. I bless thee that thou hast so mer- fully and so many times preserved me from the great ngers to which my life was exposed; and from tem- ations which would have been too hard for me, if thy ace had not prevented them, and kept me from fall- g into them: This, O Lord, I acknowledge as one f the great blessings of my life, for which I desire ntinually to magnify thy great and glorious name.

I bless thee likewise, O Lord, for that measure o health which I have enjoyed, and for my recover from a great and dangerous sickness; for any happ endowments of mind; for that degree of understandin which thou hast given me; and for preserving it t me, when my dear mother, for so many years of he life, lost the use and enjoyment of it, and might hav derived that unhappiness to me her child, if thy mer ciful goodness had not prevented it. Forgive me, O Lord, that I have made no better use of the faculties which thou hast endued me withal, for thy glory, and the benefit and advantage of others.

Blessed be thy name, likewise, that thou hast in any time of my life, and in any measure, rendered me useful to any good purpose. I acknowledge it to be all from thee; and I desire to return the praise of all to thee my great and constant benefactor.

Blessed be God for the favour thou hast given me with men both of low and high condition; and the friends which thou hast raised up for me, to preserve me from the malice of mine enemies, and those who *hate me without cause*, and *not for any fault of mine* toward them, *O Lord thou knowest*.

More especially I bless thee for that great and undeserved favour which I have found in the eyes of our excellent King and Queen. Give me, O Lord, the heart, and, if it be thy will, the opportunity to serve them in some measure to answer their favours to me, and the opinion they have conceived of me, by rendering me useful and instrumental for the publick good of this distracted kingdom and church, and endeavouring to heal and reconcile our unhappy differences, and to reform the disorders that are in thy church, and the lives and manners both of the ministers and people.

Finally, I bless thee for all the favours and blessings of my life, both spiritual and temporal, so plentifully bestowed upon me; and above all, for a sincere desire to serve and please thee, my most gracious and merciful God, and to do good to men made after thine image. Ac-

Accept, O Lord, this my hearty sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which I offer up to thy divine Majesty, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen. Amen.*

Next I made this humble and penitent confession of my sins, and earnest supplication for the pardon and forgiveness of them.

I bow myself before thee, most holy and gracious Lord God, in a deep sense of mine own vileness and sinfulness, which render me altogether unworthy of the least of those many favours and blessings wherewith thou hast been pleased to follow me all the days of my life. I am a sinful man, O Lord, and not worthy to lift up mine eyes to thee my God. My whole life hath been little else but a continued course of disobedience, of unthankfulness, and unworthy returns to thee for all thy benefits. I have *gone astray from the womb*, and have grievously transgressed thy holy laws and commandments, in thought, word, and deed.

I desire now to confess my sins to thee, and with great shame and contrition to bewail and lament them in thy presence, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son*, so that *if thou be strict to mark iniquity, O Lord! who can stand? Lord, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

I confess the folly of my childhood, and the great sins and vanities of my youth, and the many great provocations, which in the course of my life, I have been often, too often guilty of; the impurities of my heart, and the many evil actions of my life, which *thou, O Lord, knowest altogether;* and for which I desire to take shame to myself, and to be confounded before thee at the remembrance of them. *Lord, they are all in thy sight, and the most secret sins* of my life *in the light of thy countenance. I am ashamed, O my God, and blush to lift up mine eyes to thee my God.*

I con-

I confess likewise before thee, that I have most grie vously omitted and neglected my duty to thee, in n making better use of the talents and opportunities doing good, which thou hast entrusted me withal. have offended grievously, and been wanting to my du ty in a great part of my life; toward those who thou hast committed to my charge, in not instructin them, and watching over them as I ought, to inform them in the good knowledge of God; and to improv in other knowledge as was my duty to have done Lord, forgive this great and heinous sin.

I have offended against thee by anger and impati ence upon many occasions; by neglecting to cultivat my mind, and to govern my passions; by uncharitable ness and evil speaking; and especially by mispendin my precious time, which might have been employed t excellent purposes. Lord! what can I say unto the for these and innumerable other provocations of m life? *But there is forgiveness with thee, that tho mayest be feared.* Lord, let *thy goodness*, which have had such plentiful experience of, *lead me to re pentance, and not to be repented of.*

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and according to th multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out all my trans gressions, for thy mercy in Jesus Christ, *whom tho hast set forth to be propitious by his blood* for the sin of the whole world.

I do now, O Lord, in a deep sense of my sin fulness, and a hearty contrition for all my faults o omission and commission which I have been guilty of humble myself before thee, and earnestly implor thy mercy and forgiveness. I do not only repent o all the evils of my past life; but am now fully re solved by thy grace utterly to forsake them, an break off the practice of them; and do most hear tily beg the assistance of thy grace to make good thi holy resolution for the remaining part of my life *Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me*, and do thou keep it for ever in the purpose and resolution of my heart, to make good

od what I have now so solemnly ptomised to thee. ffer me not to turn again to sin and folly: but let y grace continually preserve me, and enable me to better; and *let not sin have* any more *dominion er me, that I should serve it in the lust of it.*

Grant this, O merciful Father, for the sake of my essed Saviour and Redeemer, who *died for our ns: and rose again for our justification*, and now teth at thy right hand to make intercession for sin*rs:* In his name and mediation I offer up this act repentance, and these my humble supplications r pardon and forgiveness, for thy grace and assist-ice, concluding all in this comprehensive prayer: *ur Father*, &c.

Next a prayer for God's blessing upon me and his; id his Holy Spirit to be conferred upon me in the lemn dedication of me the day following to this high id holy office.

Almighty and most merciful Lord God, *the giver every good and perfect gift*, and *the Father of ghts*, who hath promised, that *if any man lack isdom*, he shall *ask it of thee, who givest to all li-rally and upbraidest not, and it shall be given m;* I most humbly beseech thee in the solemn a-ion of the day following, wherein I thy servant n to be dedicated, and set apart to the service of iee, and thy church, in so high and holy an office, shed forth upon me, thy most unworthy servant, ie gifts and graces of thy Holy Spirit in a plentiful ieasure.

And since by thy own wise and good providence, id the important desire of those whom thou hast t in authority over us, I am called to the govern-ient and conduct of this miserable, distracted and ivided church, in so very difficult and dangerous a me, be pleased of thine infinite mercy and good-ess to thy sinful and most unworthy servant, to af-ord him the grace and assistance of thy Holy Spi-it, to enable him so to discharge the office which hou hast called him to, that thy name may be glo-ified, and this church, which thou hast committed o his charge, may be edified in faith and holiness,

in

in love, peace and union, by his diligent and faith
ful cares and endeavours; grant to him such a degr
of health, such a vigour of mind, and such a me
sure of thy heavenly grace and wisdom, as may
him to be an useful Pastor of thy church. Give m
O Lord, a mind *after thine own heart*, that I m
delight to do thy will, O my God, and let *thy law*
written in my heart. Give me courage and resol
tion to do my duty, and a heart to *spend* myself, ar
to be spent in thy service, and in doing all the go
that possibly I can the few remaining days of my pi
grimage here on earth.

I have had great experience of thy great mer
and goodness to me all my days: *Hide not thy fa*
from me in this needful time. Thou hast been m
help: leave me not, nor forsake me, O God of my sa
vation; teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me i
a plain path because of mine enemies, Psal. xxvii. 9. 1
In thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lor
my God, hear me, lest otherwise mine enemies shou
rejoice over me, and when my foot slippeth they shou
magnify themselves against me, Psal. xxxviii. 15, 1
Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wic
ed, out of the hands of unrighteous and cruel men
for thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou hast bee
my trust from my youth; by thee have I been ho
den up from the womb; my praise shall be continu
ally of thee. I am as a wonder unto many; but tho
art my strong refuge. Cast me not off in the time o
old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.
God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hither
to have I declared thy wondrous works: Now al
when I am old and gray headed forsake me not, un
til I have shewed thy strength unto this generation
and thy power to them that are to come. Hear me
O Lord, for thy mercy's sake in Jesus Christ my
blessed Saviour and redeemer. *Amen.*

Then I read the prayers in the consecration-office.
I concluded with a prayer for the King and Queen;
and a short ejaculation.

O Lord and heavenly Father, high and mighty
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the only Ruler
of

Princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the vellers upon earth, most heartily I beseech thee with y favour to behold our most gracious sovereign Lord id Lady, King William and Queen Mary; endue em with all those graces and virtues which may fit em for that high station wherein thou hast placed em; give them *wisdom and understanding to go in id out before this great people*, and a heart *to seek eir good all the days of their lives*: and make them eat examples of piety and virtue to an evil and de-nerate age. Preserve them in their persons, govern eir counsels, and prosper their forces by sea and nd, and make them victorious over their enemies. e pleased to take the person of the King into the rticular care of thy providence. *Give thy Angels arge over him to keep him in all his ways; cover his ad in the day of battle;* and crown him with victory d good success. Give courage and resolution to him, id to his fleets and armies, and take away the hearts his enemies. *Scatter the people that delight in war; ew thyself, thou Judge of the earth, and render a ward to the proud.* Let not iniquity always triumph the oppression of thy people. *Let the wickedness the wicked come to an end, but do thou establish the st.*

I beseech thee to bless and strengthen the Queen whom thou hast now committed the care and go-rnment of these nations. Give her wisdom and solution for such a time as this. Discover and de-at all the designs of wicked and unreasonable men gainst the persons of their Majesties, and against ir peace and religion, and *turn their counsels into olishness*. Strike through the loins of those that se up against that happy government, which thy si-al providence hath established among us. O Lord, less them both (if it be thy blessed will) with a hope-l issue to sit upon the throne after them, and to be blessing to those nations for many generations. his, O Lord, is not impossible with thee. Have a racious regard, I beseech thee, to the humble con-ition of the Queen thy servant, and make *her that*

was

was barren to sing, and to become a joyful mother of children. Hear my prayer, O Lord, in this behalf for thy mercy's sake in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

And now, O Lord, I humbly beseech thee to accept of these my praises and thanksgivings, which I have humbly offered to thy divine Majesty! of my humiliation and repentance for all the sins of my life; and of my resolution of a better obedience for the future, and to enable me by thy grace to make them good. Hear likewise my prayers and supplications for thy blessing upon the solemn action of the day following, and upon thine unworthy servant who is to be dedicated to thy service; and for them whom thou hast set over us; and for these sinful nations; and all for the sake of *thy dearly beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

In whose name and words I conclude my prayers. Our Father, &c.

A discourse to his servants concerning receiving the sacrament.

NOW that I have mentioned the sacrament, I have a great desire, that as many of you as can should receive it at Easter, and that you should carefully prepare yourselves for it against that time. It is the most solemn institution of our religion, and as we are Christians, we are obliged to the frequent receiving of it, and we cannot neglect it without a great contempt of our blessed Saviour and his religion. He hath appointed it for a solemn remembrance of his great love to us, in laying down his life for us, and therefore he commands us to *do it in remembrance of him;* and St. Paul tells us, that *as often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we do shew forth the Lord's death till he come.*

Both the comfort and the benefit of it are great. The comfort of it; because it does not only represent to us the exceeding love of our Saviour, in giving his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for us; but it likewise seals to us all those blessings

ıgs and benefits which are purchaſed and procured for
; by his death and paſſion; the pardon of ſins, and
)wer againſt ſin.

The benefit of it is alſo great; becauſe hereby we
e confirmed in goodneſs, and our reſolutions of bet-
r obedience are ſtrengthened; and the grace of God's
oly Spirit to enable us to do his will is hereby con-
:yed to us.

And the beſt preparation for it is by a ſincere repen-
nce for all our ſins and miſcarriages, which we re-
ember ourſelves to be at any time guilty of; by dai-
prayer to God that he would give us a ſincere repen-
nce for all our ſins, and mercifully forgive them to
; and by a ſincere and firm reſolution to forſake our
s, and to do better for the future; to be more care-
l of all our actions, and more conſtant in prayer to
)d for his grace to enable us to keep his command-
:nts: by being in charity with all men; and by for-
/ing thoſe who have injured us by word or deed, as
: hope for forgiveneſs from God.

And let none of us ſay, that we are not fitted and
epared for it. It is our duty to be ſo: and if we be
t prepared to receive the ſacrament, we are not qua-
ed for the mercy of God, and for his forgiveneſs;
: are not prepared for the happineſs of heaven, and
n have no hopes to come thither: but if we prepare
rſelves as well as we can by repentance, and reſolu-
)ns of being better, and by praying heartily and ear-
ſtly to God for his grace, he will accept of this pre-
ration, and will give us the comfort of this holy ſa-
ament.

A form of PRAYERS, used by his lat Majesty K. William III. when h received the holy sacrament, and o other occasions.

JOHN ix. 4.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while is day; the night cometh, when no man can work

COLOS. iii. 17.

Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the na of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and t Father by him.

A prayer to God, that he would be pleased to assist a accept my preparation to receive the blessed sacr ment.

I Prostrate myself before thee, my most gracious G and merciful Father, in an humble acknowled ment of my unworthiness and insufficiency of m self, for any thing that is good. I am sensible th without thee I can do nothing, and therefore do hu bly implore thy gracious assistance, and acceptance my endeavour to prepare myself for the worthy rece ing of the blessed sacrament of the body and blood thy dear Son.

Stir up, I beseech thee, such pious affections a dispositions in my soul, and fill my mind with such h ly meditations as are suitable to this occasion. Gra me such a sense of my sins, and of the sufferings my blessed Saviour for them, as may affect my he with a deep sorrow for my sins, and an eternal hatr and displeasure against them, and may effectually enga me to love and live to him who died for me, Je Christ my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A penitent confession of sins, with an humble supplication for mercy and forgiveness.

MOST gracious and merciful God, *who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, I desire to humble my soul before thee, in a deep sense of my own vileness and unworthiness, by reason of the many sins and provocations, which I have been guilty of against thy divine Majesty; by thought, word and deed. Forgive, O Lord, all the sins and follies of my life, which have been many and great, and which I do now with shame and sorrow confess and bewail before thee, for thy mercies sake in Jesus Christ. Pardon, O my God, my manifold neglects and omissions, and slight and careless performance of the duties of religion, without due affection and attention of mind; that I have not served thee with that purity of intention, with that sincerity of heart, with that fervency of spirit, with that zeal for thy glory, with that care and diligence, and constancy that I ought.

Forgive, O Lord, my sins of ignorance and infirmity, which *are more than can be numbered;* but especially, all my wilful transgressions of thy holy and righteous laws; the impurity of my heart and thoughts, all irregular appetites and passions, and every sinful and wicked practice, of what nature or kind soever. More particularly, I do with great shame and confusion of face, confess and lament before thee, from whom nothing is hid, that I have grievously offended †. These my transgressions, with many more, which I cannot remember and reckon up before thee, are all in thy sight, O Lord, and my most *secret sins in the light of thy countenance.* When I look back upon the errors and miscarriages of my past life, and consider with myself what I have done, and what I deserve at thy hands, *my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments. I am ashamed, O my God, and blush to lift up mine eyes to thee my God. Lord, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

† *Here he was used to mention particulars.*

Make me deeply sensible of the great evil of m sins, and work in me a hearty contrition for them and let the sense of them be more grievous to me tha of any other evil whatsoever. *Have mercy upon m O Lord, and according to thy tender mercies forgi all my transgressions*, for the sake of my blessed Sav our and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A prayer for the grace and assistance of God's Ho Spirit, to enable me to resolve and to do bett for the future.

AND now, O Lord, in confidence of thy gre mercy and goodness to all that are truly pen tent, and sincerely resolve to do better, I most hum bly implore the grace and assistance of thy Holy Spiri to enable me to become every day better, and to re form whatever has been amiss in the temper and di position of my mind, or in any of the actions of m life. Grant me the wisdom and understanding to kno my duty, and the heart and will to do it. Vouchsaf to me the continual presence and direction, the assis ance and comforts of the Holy Spirit; whereby I ma be disposed and enabled to do thy will with deligh and with patience and chearfulness, and contentedne to submit to it in all things. Endue me, O Lor with the true fear and love of thee, and with a pru dent zeal for thy glory. Increase in me more an more the graces of charity, and meekness, of truth and justice, and fidelity; give me humility and pat ence, and a firmness of spirit to bear every conditio with constancy and equality of mind.

Enable me, O Lord, by thy grace to govern a my appetites, and every inordinate lust and passio by temperance and purity, and meekness of wisdom setting thee *always before me, that I may not si against thee. Create in me a clean heart, O Go and renew a right spirit within me*, purify my so fro

from all evil thoughts and inclinations, from all bad intentions and designs. Deliver me, O Lord, from pride and vanity, from immoderate self-love, and obstinate self-will, and from all malice and envy, and ill-will towards any.

Make me to love thee as I ought, above all things; and let the interest of thy honour and glory be ever dearer to me than my own will, or reputation, or any temporal advantage whatsoever.

Subdue in me the evil spirit of wrath and revenge, and dispose my heart patiently to bear reproaches and wrongs, and to be ready not only to forgive, but to return good for evil.

Assist me, O Lord, more especially in the faithful and conscientious discharge of the duties of that high station in which thou hast placed me: And grant that I may employ all that power and authority which thou hast invested me with, for thy glory and the publick good; that I may rule over men in thy fear, with justice and equity, ever studying and endeavouring the good of the people committed to my charge, and as much as in me lies the peace and prosperity, the welfare and happiness of mankind.

Confirm me, O my God, in all these holy resolutions: and do thou keep it for ever in the purpose of my heart, to perform them to the utmost of my power: All which I humbly beg for thy mercies sake in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

An humble intercession with God for all mankind; for the whole Christian church, and more particularly for that part of it which is planted in these kingdoms; for the Queen, and for all under our government; for my relations and friends; for my native country, and for my allies, &c.

I Thine unworthy servant desire likewise humbly to interceed with thee, the God and father of all, for all mankind: that thou wouldst be pleased to

have compassion upon their blindness and ignorance, their gross errors and wicked practices. Send forth, I beseech thee, thy light and thy truth, to scatter that thick darkness which covers the nations, and overspreads so great a part of the world; that thy way may be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations.

Bless and preserve thy church dispersed over the face of the earth, restore to it unity and concord in the acknowledgment of the truth, and the practice of righteousness and goodness. Remove out of it all errors and corruptions, all offences and scandals, all divisions and dissensions, all tyranny and usurpation over the minds and consciences of men, that they who profess the same faith, may no longer persecute and destroy one another; but may be kind and tender hearted one towards another, as it becomes brethren, and those that are heirs of the same common salvation.

I beseech thee more especially, to be merciful to that part of thy church which thou hast planted in these kingdoms. Pity the distractions and heal the breaches of it. Purge out of it all impiety and profaneness; take away all those mistakes, and mutual exasperations, which cause so much distemper and disturbance; and restore to it piety and virtue, peace and charity. Endue the pastors and governors of it with the spirit of true religion and goodness, and make them zealous and diligent to promote it in those who are under their instruction and care. Give them wisdom to discern the best and most proper means of composing the differences of this miserably divided church, the heart to endeavour it, and by thy blessing upon their endeavours the happiness to effect it.

And I beseech thee, O Lord, of thy great goodness to bless all my relations and friends; particularly my dearest consort the Queen. I acknowledge thy special providence in bringing us together, and thereby giving me the opportunity and means of being instrumental in rescuing these nations from misery and ruin. And as thou hast been pleased to unite us

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in the neareſt relation; ſo I beſeech thee to preſerve and continue that entire love and affection between us, which becomes that relation. And if it be thy bleſſed will, and thou ſeeſt it beſt for us, bleſs us with children to ſit upon the throne of theſe kingdoms, and to be a bleſſing to them for many generations.

Be merciful alſo, O God, to my native country; let true religion and righteouſneſs be eſtabliſhed among them, as the ſureſt foundation of their peace and proſperity.

Bleſs all my allies: O righteous Lord, thou loveſt righteouſneſs, and hateſt falſhood and wrong, do thou ſtand by us in the maintenance of that juſt cauſe in which we are engaged, and bleſs us with union and good ſucceſs.

And in thy good time, O Lord, reſtore peace to Chriſtendom: put an end to thoſe bloody wars and deſolations, wherewith it hath been ſo long and ſo miſerably haraſſed: And, when thou ſeeſt it beſt and fitteſt, manifeſt thy glorious juſtice in giving check to that ambition and cruelty, which hath been the cauſe of ſo great calamities, to ſo great a part of the world. O God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, ſhew thyſelf: Lift up thy ſelf, thou Judge of the earth, and render a reward to the proud: Scatter the people that delight in war: Let the wickedneſs of the wicked come to an end, but do thou eſtabliſh the juſt.

Be merciful, O God, to all that are in affliction or diſtreſs; that labour under poverty or perſecution or captivity; under bodily pains and diſeaſes, or under temptation and trouble of mind: be pleaſed to ſupport and comfort them, and in thy due time to deliver them according to thy great mercy.

Forgive, I beſeech thee, moſt merciful Father, to all mine enemies, all their malice and ill-will towards me: and give them repentance and better minds; which I heartily beg of thee for them, as I myſelf hope for mercy and forgiveneſs at thy hands through the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, my moſt merciful God and Saviour.

A Thank.

A thankful acknowledgment of the mercies of Go both temporal and spiritual; and above all, f the redemption of mankind by the humiliation a sufferings of his Son in our nature.

BLessed and glorious Lord God, the great Cre tor, and Preserver, and Governor of all things my Saviour and Deliverer, and continual Benefacto I acknowledge, I admire, I adore, thy infinite ex cellencies and perfections: And let all the creatur in heaven and earth say, *Amen.*

I Render thanks to thee, most gracious God, f innumerable favours conferred upon me th poor creature, and most unworthy: for my bein for my reason, and for all other endowments an faculties of soul and body; for thy continual ca and watchful providence over me from the begi ning of my life, and through the whole course of i For all the happy circumstances of my birth and ducation: For the pious care of my dear and ev honoured mother and grandmother, and of all othe who had the charge of me in my tender years: F thy unwearied patience towards me, after so ma and so great provocations: And for thy merciful a wonderful preservation of me from innumerable da gers and deaths, to which I have been exposed my life. I will still hope in thy goodness, O Lor who has been my trust from my youth; by th have I been holden up from the womb, my pra shall be continually of thee. Above all I adore t tender mercy and compassion to me and all ma kind, in sending thy only Son into the world, to r deem us from sin and misery, and by suffering our nature, and dying in our stead, to purchase f us eternal life. I bless thee for the light of the gl rious gospel, for the knowledge and sense of n duty towards thee: for delivering me from tempt tions too hard for me, and supporting me under m

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y: For the directions, and assistance, and comforts f thy holy Spirit: For restraining me by thy grace, nd reclaiming me from the ways of sin and vanity; nd for all the gracious communications of thy good- ess, whereby thou hast inclined my heart to love and ear thee, and enabled me in any measure to do thy vill.

For these and all other thy blessings and favours to ne, which are more than can be numbered, I render nto thee, most gracious God, all possible praise and hanks by Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Saviour, *Amen.*

A prayer to God, to prepare my heart for the worthy receiving of the holy Sacrament, and to make me partaker of the blessings and benefits of it.

I Come to thee, O my Lord God, from whom are the preparation of the heart, and the good dis- osition of our minds for thy worship and service. 'it me, O Lord, by hearty contrition for my sins, nd a sincere resolution of a better course, to ap- roach thy altar. Accept of the expiation which hy Son hath made of all my transgressions by the acrifice of himself, as of a Lamb without spot and lemish. Let the remembrance of my sins, and of is bitter sufferings for them, pierce my very heart, nd engage me for ever to love and serve him, who aid down his life for me. Cleanse me, O Lord, from ll filthiness of flesh and spirit, that I may be a meet guest for thy holy table, and a real partaker of those blessings and benefits which are represented in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Strengthen, O God, all good resolutions in me; enable me, by thy grace, faithfully to perform the conditions of that covenant which I made in baptism, and intend to renew in the holy sacrament, by dedicating my- self entirely, and for ever to the service of my blessed Redeemer, who hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood. To him be all honour

and

and glory, thanksgiving and praise, love and obedienc
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Short meditations and ejaculations at the communio

Before the Minister begins the service.

I Lift up my soul to thee, my God, humbly implo
ing thy blessing upon me, and gracious assistan
of me in the holy action I am now about. Forgiv
my want of due preparation, and accept of my since
desire to perform an acceptable service to thee, throug
Jesus Christ.

Before the receiving of the bread.

Lord, I am not worthy of the crumbs which fa
from thy table.

After the receiving of it.

Greater love than this hath no man, that a man la
down his life for his friend.

Herein hath God commended his love to us, tha
whilst we were enemies, he gave his Son to die for us

Before the receiving of the cup.

What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits
I will take the cup of salvation, and I will bless th
name of the Lord.

After the receiving of it.

Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift, his dear
ly beloved Son Jesus Christ, in whom we have re
demp

emption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ns.

After the concluſion of the whole action.

Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within ne, bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, nd forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine niquities, and healeth all thy diſeaſes; who redeemeth hy life from deſtruction, and crowneth thee with lo- ing kindneſs and tender mercies; who ſatisfieth thy nouth with good things. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul.

A prayer to be uſed in private afterwards.

I praiſe and magnify thy great and glorious name, O Lord, my God, for the bleſſed opportunity afford- d to me this day, of commemorating thy infinite good- neſs and mercy to me and all mankind, in ſending thy nly Son into the world to take our nature upon him, o ſubmit to the infirmities and miſeries of it, to live mongſt us, and to die for us: And to preſerve the nemory of this great love and goodneſs of thine to us or ever in our hearts, that thou haſt been pleaſed to ppoint the bleſſed ſacrament, for a ſolemn remem- brance of it. Grant, O Lord, that I may faithfully keep and perform that holy covenant which I have this day ſo ſolemnly renewed and confirmed in thy preſence, and at thy table. Let it be an eternal obligation upon me, of perpetual love and obedience to thee. Let nothing ſeem hard for me to do, or grievous for me to ſuffer for thy ſake, who whilſt I was a ſinner, and an enemy to thee, lovedſt me at ſuch a rate as never any man did his friend.

Grant that by this ſacrament, there may be con- veyed to my ſoul new ſpiritual life and ſtrength, and ſuch a meaſure of thy grace and aſſiſtance, as may enable me to a greater care of my duty for the future:

future: That I may henceforth live as becomes th redeemed of the Lord; even to him who died for m sins, and rose again for my justification, and is no set down on the right hand of the throne of Goo to make intercession for me. In his holy name an words I conclude my imperfect prayers:

OUR Father which art in heaven, hallowed b thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will b done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this da our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, a we forgive them that have trespassed against us And lead us not into temptation, but deliver u from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, an the glory, for ever. Amen.

A M

An Alphabetical TABLE of the chief matters contained in these ten volumes of Archbishop TILLOTSON's Sermons.

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